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# ADDRESSES AND LECTURES

ON

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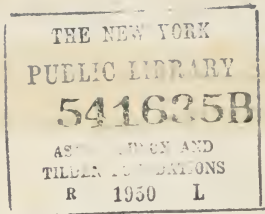
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LATE CHAPLAIN OF THE SENATE OF THE U. S.

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# P R E F A C E.



MOST of the following discourses have appeared in print. The author having been frequently applied to for copies of some of those which were delivered on occasions of great and melancholy public interest, and having been unable to furnish them, is induced to present them, together with a few others of kindred character, in a collected form, with the full knowledge that they have little value other than that which they possess as memorials of great National events.

CINCINNATI, 1855.



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FUNERAL ADDRESSES.

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# ADDRESS,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

## FUNERAL OF THE HON. ABEL P. UPSHUR

AND OTHERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES BY THE EXPLOSION ON BOARD  
THE PRINCETON, FEBRUARY 29, 1844.

DELIVERED IN THE PRESIDENT'S MANSION,  
MARCH 2, 1844.



# I.

## A D D R E S S .

NEVER has it been my lot to rise in a place of mourning under so intense and profound a conviction of the inefficacy of words to add any thing of impressiveness to that which the scene itself presents, as upon this occasion. Upon ordinary occasions of mortality, it not unfrequently happens, that the words of the speaker appear to be needed to convince us, even in the presence of the dead, that we must die ; and to make us realize the uncertainty of life, even when we stand before the most convincing evidence of the truth. But I do not feel that it is so here and now. In this instance, the fact of death, as known to all, itself speaks with awful and appalling eloquence. The dreadful catastrophe which produced the death of the distinguished individuals whose obsequies we celebrate, lives in the ineffaceable colors of horror, in the hearts of its paralyzed spectators, and of those who have listened to their recital. So sudden, so terrific, so like the lightning execution of a word spoken by the Almighty, was the dread catastrophe, that we stand before it, pale and quivering, and confess that “ the Lord—the Lord, he is God ! ” The speaker’s task is already

done for him. *There* is the solemn argument and the touching appeal—*there* is the awful fact and its impressive lesson! It is briefly and simply this: “We must die; let us prepare for it.” I know, my friends, that in this presence of the honored dead, you confess the cogency of the argument, and feel the subduing pathos of the appeal. There is not one of us, who is not, for the time at least, made wise and thoughtful by this awful dispensation. By it, youth has been forced into the wisdom of experienced age. By it, a strong arresting hand has been laid upon the thoughtless, compelling them to think. By it, the gay have been made grave. The statesman, arrested amid his high cares, has bent over the lifeless forms of those who were his associates but as yesterday, and as he dropped over them the tear of friendship, has felt and confessed the nothingness of renown. The Senator has paused in the responsible duties of his country’s legislation, awed and solemnized by this sudden stroke of death. Giving to patriotism the hallowed spirit and accents of religion, he has uttered, in words of persuasive and lofty eloquence, lessons of the truest and purest—because of Heavenly—wisdom.\* For the time at least, we all are wise, we all are thoughtful. God grant that we may be wise unto salvation!

The first circumstance in this fearful catastrophe which arrests our attention, is the elevated station of all its victims. I know that the true worth of a soul, in the eye

\* See the speech of the Hon. Mr. Rives, in the Senate of the United States, on the day succeeding the catastrophe upon the Princeton.

of reason and of God, depends not at all upon its outward environment, but upon its moral characteristics. Nevertheless, constituted as we are, it does more powerfully impress us to see daring Death climb to the summit of life, and at one fell stroke bring down the loftiest cedars of Lebanon, than it does to see him pass his inexorable scythe under the lilies of the valley. As they are precipitated from their high elevation, the noise of their fall wakes a startling echo in the heart, and scatters around wide spread ruin. In our human weakness, we are apt to say, "if the lofty must thus fall, then how surely must the humble." Though there be no force of logic in the deduction, because all alike are mortal, there is yet a salutary impression for the heart in such natural reflection. But though such an event may add nothing to the *proof* that we must die, which does not exist in the case of the humblest child of mortality, it does most strikingly enforce this lesson, that "the glory of man is as the flower of grass, and that the fashion of this world passeth away." There are before us the lifeless remains of those of whom affection does not speak more fondly here at home, than fame speaks loudly and proudly of them abroad. One, who has held two elevated offices under the present administration with honor, and discharged their duties with high reputation and success, was crowned with every civic and social virtue.\* †Another, a citizen of the same State, called but recently to the high office which he occupied at the period of his

\*Hon. Mr. Upshur.

†Hon. Mr. Gilmer.

sudden death, has been distinguished in the general council of the nation, and the political history of his native State. \*Of him who sleeps by his side, we may say, that none knew him but to love him — so pleasingly were blended in him, the characteristic excellences of his profession, with those which were peculiarly and strikingly his own. † Another victim of this awful calamity, a guest here, is well known in the councils of his native State. ‡ And yet another, not forgotten because his remains, in obedience to the wishes of widowed love, are not here, has not only distinguished himself by his able services for his country at a foreign court, but has made for himself, by his singularly amiable and attractive character, a large and warm place in the hearts of his fellow-citizens at home. And now, of all this station, talent, and renown, this is the end — this the all ! Oh, may I not say, *must* I not say, to the illustrious assemblage here gathered about the dead, with the respect which is due to their exalted station, yet with the fidelity which becomes the humblest minister of God, that if, forgetful of their responsibilities to Almighty God, forgetful of the necessity of preparation for existence beyond the tomb, they are in pursuit of fame or honor, as an end, as a substantial good, as a satisfying enjoyment, as the *enough* of their existence ; must I not say to them, as the impressive lesson of this dark day, that they are in pursuit of a shining, illusive shadow, which lures them on to disappointment and to ruin ! It is the child's chase after the rainbow —

\* Captain Kennon.

† Col. Gardiner

‡ Hon. Mr. Maxey.



and when you shall fall panting and exhausted on the hill-top, where its base seemed to rest, the glory, to your eye, will have receded as far from you as ever, though you may seem to those below you in the distance, to be wrapped in its glittering radiance, as in a robe of glory. From yonder palls there comes to the men of station and renown this impressive lesson, "This world's glory is, at the best, but a poor distorted shadow of that which is real and substantial; and he whose heart is supremely and exclusively fixed upon the shadow, loses the reality. Seek ye the glory and the bliss of heaven."

Another circumstance of this calamity, which has not failed to arrest the attention of us all, is the awful suddenness of the stroke, and the appalling contrast exhibited between the mirth and happiness of one moment, and the terror and agony of the next. A few evenings since, this hall was lighted up and adorned with the flower of the capital and country—its rank, its talent, its renown, its youth, and grace, and beauty. The illustrious deceased were all here, with hearts beating with the pulses of health and of enjoyment, and with their well won honors clustering upon them. Now, they are *here*, and so! The next day saw them embarked with a large and gay assemblage in that wondrous ship, which seems to possess a conscious vitality, and to move over the waters at the pleasure of its own wizard will. In that vessel, freighted with rank, fashion, and beauty, consecrated for the time to purposes of festivity, as it glides over the sunny waters, with Death crouching in his awful den,

ready to spring on those who dreamed not of his presence, I seem to see an affecting emblem of the life of pleasure, on which so many thoughtless ones embark, unconscious, as they glide over life's glancing waters, of approaching doom. And now, "all is merry as a marriage bell," as the festive bark speeds on—"youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm." While some linger at the banquet, and some are listening to the song, these fated ones walk, smiling and unconscious, into the jaws of death. In the twinkling of an eye, on wings of flame, their souls rush into the presence of the thrice-holy, heart searching God! My friends, I desire not to harrow up your minds by an attempt to recall the horrors that succeeded that dreadful and fatal explosion. I wish but to urge the lesson taught by that fearful transition from merriment to woe—from the light laugh of hilarity to the wail of agonized and bereaved love. Is it wise, is it right, in a world where such things can be and are, to live as if they could not be and are not? Had you—I speak to those, especially, who were present, and to all who hear me—had you been thus suddenly summoned into the presence of a holy God, do you suppose you would have been ready to meet him? The question is not, as the heart's sophistry will endeavor to persuade some it is,—“was it, abstractly considered, right or wrong to be there?” It is a question far higher and more momentous. The question is this—Is the temper of your soul such, is its condition in the sight of God such, is the tenor of your life such, is your manifested regard to God's

law such, as fits you to stand up without warning and without preparation before Him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? It is a fearful question. I know not what you are in the sight of God, but I know what awful sayings the word of my God contains. I remember that it asks this question, and gives this answer: "Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." I remember the question: "How shall ye escape, if ye *neglect* so great salvation?" I hear coming from this dispensation, for many a careless one, this fearful declaration: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Will any satisfy their minds by the resolution not again to place themselves in a scene of danger! Alas, my friends, we know not when we are in danger. We walk over slumbering mines. We dance on the brow of the precipice. There is never but a step between us and death. It is only because a forgotten God upholds us, that we draw our present breath. It is altogether of his mercies that we are not consumed.

An earthquake may be bid to spare  
The man that's strangled by a hair!

A wiser and more solemn determination than to avoid supposed danger, is demanded of us all by this dispensation. Oh! may all here present, for whom the world has an absorbing charm, which makes them forget their God, listen to the awful lesson, delivered in thunder and flame,

and blood and death, and woe and wailing, which God has addressed to this, alas ! too gay, too giddy Capital !

Another circumstance in this catastrophe, which arrests all minds and moves all hearts, is the sorrow of the stricken and bereaved relatives and friends. It is, indeed, such a woe as a stranger intermeddleth not with. We would not rudely penetrate into the sacred sanctuary of their sorrowing hearts. But we would—and find it the dictate of our hearts to do it—obey the scripture injunction which directs us to weep with those that weep. But that we know “Earth hath no sorrow which Heaven can not cure,” it would seem that their affliction is more than they can bear. If, at this dark hour, sympathy is soothing to their hearts, we can assure them that is poured forth in full and flowing tides from the heart of this community—nay from the national heart. If at such a moment, earthly honors had any balm for wounded hearts, that balm would not be wanting. If—and here we speak without peradventure—if the prayer of pious hearts prevail with God—if the blessed influence of that Spirit whose dear name is *Comforter*—have a soothing ministry for the stricken soul, they shall not be left un comforted—they shall see “the bright light in the cloud.” And as we think of the sufferers by this calamity, let us not forget the commander of the fated ship. It is a prayer in which I am sure every heart here unites, that that gallant and accomplished officer may soon again be restored to his country’s service, and that he may be

spared the unavailing bitterness of a too long, too deeply cherished, sorrow and regret.

And now, in conclusion, let us bear with us to the tomb another solemn lesson which this dispensation teaches us. It is a truth broadly and brightly written in God's word, that, for national transgressions, God visits a nation's offenses with a rod, and their sins with scourges. Sometimes he sends disaster and gloom over the people, and sometimes he strikes down their choicest rulers. In either case, it becomes a people, and a people's legislators and rulers, to humble themselves before God, that his wrath may be turned away from them, and that his hand be not stretched out still. Now, by this dispensation, from the highest officer of the Government, from the bereaved ruler of the nation, who, at one stroke, has lost his trustiest counselors and his choicest friends, through many intervening circles, to the hallowed one of home, there is weeping, lamentation, and woe. I altogether read amiss the design of this dispensation if it be not to bring the people to a humble confession and abandonment of their sins; to teach our judges counsel and our senators wisdom. Salutory, indeed, would be the effect of this dispensation if here and now—and what place so fit, what scene so appropriate, what "hour" so "accepted," as this place and scene and hour?—salutory, indeed, would this dispensation prove if here and now, in the hearts of this embodied representation of the people of this country, there were breathed by all the silent vow to Heaven that they would exert



their personal and official influence to secure honor to God's supreme authority, obedience to God's paramount law. If the resolution here be taken to promote, by influence and example, the observance of God's holy day, to check licentiousness and dissipation, and all the national crimes which cry out to Heaven against us, then would we see light springing out of the darkness of this dispensation. Then it would be seen how righteousness exalteth a nation. Then would God be the shield of this people's help, and its excellency. Then would it ride upon the high places of the world's renown. Then we would have no need to fear, for the Lord of Hosts would be with us—the God of Jacob would be our refuge.

I will delay the last melancholy duties to the dead no longer. My prayer is that we may pluck the plants of heavenly wisdom which will spring out of the graves of these illustrious men, and apply them to our health and healing, as individuals and as a people. And may God grant that this awful dispensation may accomplish that whereunto he sent it!

MAGISTRATES GOD'S MINISTERS.



A DISCOURSE,

ON THE DEATH OF

HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

DELIVERED IN TRINITY CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.





## II.

### D I S C O U R S E.

FOR HE IS THE MINISTER OF GOD:—Rom. xiii. 4.

THE Scriptures always call the civil ruler “the minister of God.” We, on the contrary, are in the habit of regarding him, and calling him, and treating him, as the creature and the minister of man. As if he were clay in our hands, and we the potter, we mould and make and break him. We acknowledge in him no authority but what we give. We receive from him no benefit which we do not first empower him to bestow. It sounds strangely to us, the only source, as we call ourselves, of political power—this declaration of the Apostle that our rulers are the *ministers of God*, and not *our* ministers.

The language of Scripture and our common accredited and applauded language on this subject, can hardly be reconciled. We speak of our rulers as *ordained of us*. “The powers that be,” says the Bible, “*are ordained of God*.” “There is no power in rulers,” say we, “but what is entrusted to them by the people.” “There is no power,” says the Scripture, “*but of God*.” “Look to us,” we say to our rulers, “and give account to us of your use of our delegated power.” “Look to me, your God,”

says the Almighty in his holy word: "to me whose minister you are, attending continually on this very thing, exercising my power for good to him that doeth well, and bearing my sword, not in vain, against him that doeth evil."

This is not an apparent discrepancy only; it is real. There is a difference between the popular idea of a civil ruler, and that conveyed to us in the word of God. We shall be well occupied, we think, this morning, in opening this truth of Scripture, that our rulers are God's ministers, coming to us with authority from him, and responsible to him for the mode in which that authority is exerted over us. We shall thus render honor to whom honor is due. We shall show respect to God's institution. We shall look upon our rulers not as our servants, but as the ministers of God. We shall be made to feel the dignity of their delegated rule, as the vicereignty of heaven, and the solemnity of our responsibility to "be subject unto the higher powers." And I may, with the more hope of a favorable hearing, broach this neglected and forgotten truth, while there remains upon your memories and hearts the vivid impression of that just departed and venerable patriot and ruler, whose character and history you recognize as that of one who felt himself to be not man's poor puppet, but God's great minister *to man* for good. Bear in mind, while I speak, his constant reference to duty, his tireless toil, ever "as in the great taskmaster's eye;" his inflexible adherence to the right and true, which rested as if they were God's own shadow,

solemnly on his soul ; his devotion to the welfare of his country and the world ; his indifference to human censure and applause, when conscience spoke out with a clear voice of approval and of cheer ; bear in mind this example, and then, however in theory you may contest the truth of the Apostle, you will be compelled to confess that in practice you have seen one who bore himself as “ the minister of God,” and who was the minister of God to us “ for good.”

The theme then of our discourse is this: THE CIVIL RULER, IN WHATEVER DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT HE MAY RULE, IS THE MINISTER OF GOD.

In what sense are our civil rulers the ministers of God ? Are they so in any higher sense than that in which every man may be called God’s minister, who, in whatever department of life he serves or rules, is called upon to do all to the glory of God ; all as unto God, and not as unto men, and may, therefore, properly receive this designation ? In a higher sense than this, we conceive it to be, that he wears this august and lofty style.

*He is God’s minister because the State is God’s institution.* Such is the clear purport of the passage to which we have referred. God has established three divine institutions in the world : the State, the Family, and the Church. All are God’s institutions, and all intended, by various measures and in various degrees, to discipline man as in preparatory schools, for the higher school of heaven. We all recognize at once that the Church is God’s institution, and not man’s. We recognize almost as readily that the

family organization is divine. We feel that there is a sacredness in it, that God speaks in the laws which govern it, that parental authority is wielded by delegation from on high, and filial obedience rendered in deference to a law of which the weak parent is but the proclaimer and the administrator; that when its purity is invaded an inroad is made into a consecrated enclosure, fenced all around by God's own law, and awful with the venerableness of God's own presence. Or, if we lose the truth that the family is divine, and call it human in its organization and its sanctions, then we begin to undermine all private virtue; then the marriage tie has no more sacredness than the bond of a commercial partnership; then schemes are formed for destroying the family relation and turning human households into herds, whose law shall be caprice and whose liberty shall be that cruelest despotism, dominant and peremptory passion! All but the Deist and the Libertine confess that the family is divine.

But that the State is divine all are not so ready to acknowledge. Yet, as we have seen, the Scriptures assure us that the powers that be are ordained of God; that whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; that there is no power but of God; that by him kings reign and princes decree justice. In harmony with which declarations rulers are called God's ministers, and they are said to bear his sword not in vain. As such we are bidden to honor and obey them, not only for wrath but for conscience sake. If these words mean any thing intel-

ligible they mean that the State is a divine institution, and that the civil governor is the minister of God.

Now we apprehend that the reason why many would, at first, start back from this doctrine as a political heresy, disinterred from the trampled burial-places of the apologists of "the right divine of kings to govern wrong," is this:—They suppose that its admission will make it necessary for them, also, to admit that if government be divine, then its form and its officers, like those of the family, must be fixed and unalterable; that a people can have no right to organize or change a government, that resistance to its decisions must be disloyalty to God, and that man must supinely yield and fit himself into the position which his rulers may choose to assign. This would be to deny the consecrated axioms which he lisped in the nursery, spelt in his first primer, read in all the books which his youth devoured, heard in all streets and homes and market places, in the halls of learning, in the chambers of legislation, and even in the church of God. He cannot listen patiently to what seems to him an imperious dogma, which comes to him crowned with stolen power—a sword, red and reeking with the blood of patriots and of saints, in the one hand, and rattling manacles in the other. But if he will listen patiently he may see that all the consequences which his flurried mind leaped at do not necessarily follow the truth that government is divine; he may learn a lesson which he sadly needs, to make him understand his duty and his dignity as a citizen or ruler; he may welcome it as that needed truth whose prevalence



may save a land else doomed. Let us endeavor to make this truth evident and clear.

Civil society is an ordinance of God. It is his will that men should live under organized governments, with laws and rules. Those, therefore, who bear sway in that divine society must, of course, be officers with a divine authority; they must be the ministers of God. Now regal despotisms have laid hold of this truth, that civil rulers are of divine institution, and have branded on the hearts which they enslaved their mark of ownership, by making them believe that kings, *as kings*, were God's appointment, and that implicit obedience to them was loyalty to the King of kings in heaven. The apologists of despotism, gilding and wreathing with flowers the chains that bound them, have endeavored to prove that those chains were forged in heaven, and that while they are strong to keep them in security and to hold them back from the commission of the sin which is followed by woe, they are long enough and light enough to allow free and unimpeded range in every field of legitimate enjoyment. They have perverted the language of the Old and New Testaments, which enjoined obedience to rulers, into an enforcement of implicit submission to them *as kings*, and made it seem blasphemous rebellion, nay, treason against the kingship of God himself, ever under any circumstances of oppression to reclaim against or resist their tyrannous restraint. But observe: Though civil government and governors are of divine enactment, God has not specified into what forms, whether monarchical, or oligarchical, or

republican, governments shall be organized, but only that they shall exist for the accomplishment of the ends of judgment and of mercy. St. Peter bids us obey every "ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well." Here the laws of civil rulers, who are said by St. Paul to be "ordained of God," are described as "the ordinances of man," and obedience is enjoined "for the Lord's sake." The two passages harmonize into this truth, that the State is of divine institution, and its form and enactments are human, and that obedience to the human ordinance is enforced by a sanction which is divine. The State, in what form soever organized, is to be obeyed, "for the Lord's sake." There is nothing in Scripture, rightly understood, which constrains or favors the adoption of a regal form, or makes any one form obligatory. At the time when these words of the Apostle were written, in which "the power that was" was the power of Rome, they could have furnished no more sanction to a kingly than to a popular administration. For Rome was as much like a Republic then, at least in form, as she was like a Monarchy. She wore the name and many of the insignia of freedom, while she groaned under a despotism, iron and absolute. Despotism stood trampling with bloody heel on human hearts, but she stood arrayed and disguised in the bright and flowing robes which the beautiful, and bountiful, and genial spirit of freedom once had worn; and her citizens did not awake

to the knowledge that they were slaves until they had lost the desire and the ability to become freemen. Bearing in mind, then, this distinction—that while government is the ordinance and rulers are the ministers of God, it is left to the State to determine upon and adopt that form of government which, under the circumstances in which they may be placed, shall prove to be the most wise, expedient, and just—bearing in mind this distinction, we shall find the truth which is here proposed a rich and neglected source of blessing. It will correct many perilous errors. It will restore many wholesome and forgotten truths.

But let us first consider the objection to which it may be considered justly liable.

When a statement is made that the State is a divine institution, then modern patriotism immediately scents priestcraft in the proposition, and becomes dreadfully alarmed lest, in some way, it should lead to the doctrine of the necessity of the union of Church and State. It declaims virtuously of the danger of the despotism of the Church over the State. Strange how the ghosts of dead power scare men so much more than its living and stalwart embodiments! We see no connection between the premise and the conclusion. We know not why the State may not be as much inclined to lord it over the Church as the Church over the State. If the State be divine and know herself to be, will she not be more securely guarded against any claim on the part of the Church, on the ground of a divine prerogative, to take her under her fostering care? May she not then say: “I too have a charter



from on high?" Do we not provide for the independence of the State when we endeavor to show her that she too is the child of God? If she will claim and act upon her true character as an organization of heaven, she will take away from the Church all excuse and reason for a claim of supremacy or obedience. The Church will then recognize her as a divine sister; she will not then feel that the civil government has so failed of realizing her own true character and claims as to make it necessary for herself to interpose, and guide her as by the constraint of a law from heaven, in the path of duty. Knowing that her own kingdom is not of this world, and that the power of civil government extends over her in all things which concern the public peace and welfare, she will more cheerfully submit to an authority which not only is, but knows itself to be, of God, and obey the State in all things where obedience to her would not be disloyalty to her Lord.

Nor does this doctrine imply the duty of absolute, unquestioning and passive obedience, under any and every circumstance of oppression and injustice. On this point I borrow the language of another:

"Besides the divine appointment of civil magistracy, there is another human institution which stands forth on the same authority. I mean the domestic institution. The family, no less than the State, is of divine origin. Filial obedience is a duty of piety towards God. The parent is the heaven-appointed master of the family—the child a heaven-obliged subject. The duty of the one is

implicit, and the authority of the other is absolute. But it does not follow that either is unlimited. All persons admit that there may be emergencies which justify filial disobedience, in which 'the first commandment with promise,' as it is called,—'Honor thy father and thy mother,'—may be set aside, and the child may stand up before his human parent and assert his independence as a child of God. Without attempting to specify the reasons which would warrant such an exception, I may say, what will be generally admitted, that the child may transgress the parental rule only when his obedience would involve the violation of a higher law. When submission to the parent is identical with disobedience to God, the filial duty deceases. The human being rises above the domestic. His insubordination to man is, then, simple allegiance to God. If we transfer this reasoning to the case of civil obedience, the objection to the theory of the divine authority of government is sufficiently met. That theory does not deny the moral propriety of disobedience, under all circumstances. On the contrary, it may recognize the maxim of the early Christian martyr Polycarp, 'giving honor to potentates, but not in contradiction of religion.' It will justify rebellion when conformity would be a crime. It thrusts aside minor obligations, to save those which are fundamental. It deposes the delegated authority, in order to make way for the supreme. It exalts the human above the national, and makes rebellion not only conceivably justifiable, but even dutiful. The right of revolution is, then,

literally a sacred thing, because it is obedience to the highest divinity of government.”\*

But besides not being liable to these objections, this doctrine will bring along with its recognition many and salutary blessings.

It removes an idea of the origin and the source of governmental power which is low and earthly and utterly inadequate to secure the ends of government, and yet it will so far save the principle of which this idea is a perversion, as to assign to it its proper, and in its proper, most useful place. The common theory among us is that the people are the one source of all power, that no authority, properly so called, belongs to rulers, but that they are rather the agents of the people and ministers of their will for certain specified purposes and on certain terms. The people are, therefore, bound to obey them, because and only so far as they have agreed with them to obey. The people govern themselves through these agents. They make a contract, a bargain, with them: “Do you, our agents, such and so much work for us, and we will, according to the terms of the bargain, render you so much honor, and comply with the provisions of our contract by which we have entrusted to you certain powers for our own benefit, even over ourselves.” No higher than this is the common theory of government. And if it ever meditates enough to seek a basis, it resorts to the theory of an original social compact, which hangs on nothing, which is a mere floating web work woven from the brains of the

\*Election Sermon by the Rev. Alexander H. Vinton, D.D., Boston, 1848.

theorists who prepared the way for the French Revolution. What is government on this theory but a mere thing of bargain? What higher sanction is there to it than that of a human contract? What more sacred obligation than a commercial one? On this theory government has nothing in it grand and imposing. It has in it nothing that is august and divine. St. Paul is all wrong. The powers that be are not ordained of God; they are ordained of men. Civil governors are not the ministers of God; they are man's ministers. Surely the vast interests of society cannot be safely trusted to a principle so low and earth-born as this! The obligation to the State must be of a more solemn, constraining, awe-inspiring sort than that of a bargain, or it can not bind multitudes who might feel and confess the force of a real and personal, but not of a constructive and seemingly nominal, contract. For if I make a contract, face to face with my fellow man, and we both hold the sealed writings which contain its provisions and conditions, I am pressed by a near and personal sense of duty. But a contract with persons whom I do not know, with a vague array of legislative, judicial and executive administrators; a contract made, it may be, before I was born, and to which I have given but an implied assent, whose instruments are the constitutions and laws of States; how can such a contract have a strong and personal hold on the conscience and the life? Depend upon it, we must have a higher sanction to the government than this; our rulers must be invested with a more sacred power than this, or we perish! We must

adopt the grand and sublime polity of St. Paul. We must see divinity in the State. We must hear God speaking to our conscience in the voice of his ministers—"the powers that be." Oh, we take from the State all its grandeur, and from Patriotism all its glory and its motive, if we make Government to be godless and rulers to be but human factors. What man of elevated mind would care to devote himself to the service of the State, by that devotion denying himself many of the sweet charities of life, and drudging with thankless toil, often made drearier by the howl of vindictive hate and persecution around his lonely heart; who that knows his immortality and the immortal ends for which he should live and labor, would thus consecrate himself to the service of the State, if he thought her a thing so pitiful and poor as this—if he did not see her to be beautiful and divine as the representative of the government of God, and if he did not regard himself as God's minister to man for good, and therefore armed by serenest love of man and highest sense of duty to God against being seduced by the flatteries or terrified by the frowns of those whose servant he is for the Master's sake and in the Master's name? No wonder that patriotism becomes a trade, when government becomes a partnership and obedience a bargain. But adopt this principle of the Apostle, that the civil ruler is the minister of God, and I see the grandest sanction that can grasp a human spirit, compelling the people to loyalty to the State. Adopt this principle, and I see grandeur in the life and awful beauty in the death of the Patriot



and the Statesman. On this principle I see why the great and good toil on in the service of their country, whether that country smiles upon them or frowns. On this principle alone I see beauty and elevation in the submission of the Citizen, dignity and grandeur in the administration of the Ruler. On this principle I see that the sceptre of State is the venerable symbol of divine authority, and that the sword of government is edged and glittering with the awfulness of divine judgment. On this principle alone I see security for the fidelity of the ruler to the people and of the people to the ruler. In the prevalence of this principle alone have I any hope for the future welfare of my country.

But if this divine polity of St. Paul remove a false and mere earth-born idea that the people are the only source of power, and that there is no authority in the civil governor but what is conveyed to him by human compact, it yet leaves the theory of the social compact an important though subordinate position. The State itself is divine, though the fashion of it is an ordinance of man. With us, in the language of Judge Story, society is organized on the principle that it is essentially a mutual compact entered into between every individual and all the rest of those who form that society. This principle is the *rule* of our *organization*, not the *ground* of our *obligation*. This is that ordinance of man to which we are to be obedient *for the Lord's sake*. This is the form taken by the divine institution, the State, in this our land—the being of the State divine, the form human—obedience

to it in that form (because it must have some form) being enforced by the solemn sanctions which constrain loyalty to a government whose authority is from heaven. I believe it is incomparably the best rule or principle on which human society was ever organized. When we shall put divinity behind it, when we shall see God forming it, when we shall hear his voice in its enactments, then glorious things shall be spoken of this land. Let no one say that this view of government upturns all received and consecrated doctrines on this subject. If it be God's view, I care not if it do. But it does not so. It does indeed take the theory of the social compact down from the position of supremacy which belongs to God, where the popular prejudice has enthroned it. But it leaves the theory entire in its own proper position. It leaves it entire, but instead of putting it in the place of God, where it is invested with none of his awfulness and power, it sees God beyond it, informing it with his own awful attributes of holiness, justice, love. It is the same in form, but far more grand and glorious in character. Oh no, this theory removes nothing that is visible in the forms of State. It only detects the grand life-principle that animates its forms. The child, or the simple Pagan, or the Atheist Astronomer, may see in the vast orbs that throng immensity only great machines, with nothing but forces, mechanical or chemical, without or within. Does it unloose the subtle cords which bind them in their spheres; does it disengage the affinities which fix them in certain forms; does it send crashing an-

archy among them, when the soul reaches the sublime truth that God is in the midst of them, that his hand formed and his power holds them, and that they glide around their orbits in obedience to his ever-present potent will? Oh no! It only makes him look upon them with deeper reverence and awe, when to his soul the hitherto voiceless heavens declare the glory of God, and the hitherto inexpressive firmament showeth his handiwork. Then as he gazes and adores, the exclamation is forced out of his heart by the sublime realization: "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou so regardest him?" When we see divinity in the State we do not disturb its form, but we bow in lowlier homage before the divinity which it enshrines.

My brethren, you have observed this theme to be one quite out of the range of my usual pulpit ministrations. Yet, I trust it is not inappropriate to my office, as you feel that it is not inappropriate to the time. It is an effort to give, or rather to make you feel that God has given, a religious sanction to the State; that he has made it a divine institution; that he has given to rulers the lofty mission of acting as the ministers of God, and to citizens the scarcely less lofty part of being subject to the higher power as to the ordinance of God. This, as it seems to me, is an effort to reinstate my Master into the seat of authority from which he has been too long deposed. And I felt that I should have failed to obey the Apostle's injunction to "render honor to whom honor is due," if I had neglected, under whatever disadvantages of hasty



preparation, to pay a tribute, this morning, to the great and Christian patriot and statesman, whose sudden departure has left such a chasm in our midst, by the contemplation of some high truth suited to the solemnity of the occasion. Sure I am, if his great and modest spirit could speak to us, he would admonish the minister of religion to take occasion from his life and death to inculcate some great lesson of divine duty, rather than to spend our poor eulogies on him. Those eulogies have been fitly, eloquently, affectionately, touchingly spoken by his bereaved compatriots, friends and children in the halls of Congress. It would ill become me to attempt to speak the praises appropriate to him as a statesman, when the circumstances of his life and death had in them so much of reference to God, that the civil orators who honored his departure could not forbear to mingle in their tribute the lessons and counsels of religion with the expressions of patriotism and praise, weaving into the myrtle wherewith they crowned his then pallid but late busy brow, the immortal amaranth from heaven. Enough for me to say that his supreme consecration to duty, his high conception of the dignity of his mission as a legislator and ruler, his fervid devotion to his work, his habitual reference to his accountability to God, his utter disregard of public opinion so long as he felt himself in the path of duty, his faithful stand at his chosen post even until death—these are the circumstances which suggested the topic, and seemed to me to furnish an illustration of the truth, that the civil ruler is “the minister of God.” Very lofty was his con-

ception of the duty, and dignity of a ruler, and of the grandeur of governments as the visible representatives of the justice and mercy of the Supreme. Of late his mind had turned much from the imperfect government of men to the perfect kingdom of the Almighty. We can not but imagine that, as he often sat in that seat, now veiled and vacant in the hall of legislation, withdrawn into his own spirit, and his head bowed upon his breast—we can not but imagine that from the midst of that scene of turmoil his mind delighted to escape in thought to the beatitudes and perfection of those governments, principalities and powers which in heaven are all tranquil and glorious with the present and seen and felt power of God. Perhaps some such thoughts cheered his departing spirit in his closing days, on the confines of the eternal world, as soothed the dying hour of the majestic and saintly Hooker. Sublime and beautiful were the heavenly visions which, like troops of angels, must have passed, smiling and blessing him as they passed, before his happy eye. His physician, seeing that his countenance was that of one who was deep in contemplation and averse from discourse, inquired his present thoughts. He replied: “That he was meditating the number and the nature of the angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh that it might be on earth!” Even such visions and meditations may have occupied the silent soul of the venerable and thoughtful man whose memory we honor. Some such meditations which gave him *the first*

*of heaven*, may have enabled him to say so promptly "*I am content*," when he cried "*this is the last of earth!*"

May we all so live as to be able, also, to say with the venerable man who has left us, and to say it in the spirit of satisfying retrospect and of bright anticipation, in reliance upon the mercy of God in Christ for forgiveness and acceptance, "This is the last of earth: I am content!"



# A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, APRIL 2, 1850,

AT THE

## FUNERAL OF HON. JOHN C. CALHOUN,

SENATOR OF THE UNITED STATES FROM SOUTH CAROLINA.

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.



TUESDAY, April 2, 1850.

The remains of the deceased were brought into the Senate at 12 o'clock, attended by the Committee of Arrangements and the Pall-bearers.

### COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. MASON,	MR. DODGE, of Wis.,
MR. DAVIS, of Miss.,	MR. DICKINSON,
MR. ATCHISON,	MR. GREENE.

### PALL-BEARERS.

MR. MANGUM,	MR. CASS,
MR. CLAY,	MR. KING,
MR. WEBSTER,	MR. BERRIEN.

### III.

#### DISCOURSE.

I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.—PSALM lxxxii. 6, 7.

ONE of the princes is fallen! A prince in intellect; a prince in his sway over human hearts and minds; a prince in the wealth of his own generous affections, and in the rich revenues of admiring love poured into his heart; a prince in the dignity of his demeanor — this prince has fallen — fallen!

And ye all, his friends and peers, illustrious statesmen, orators, and warriors — “I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; *but* ye shall die like men, and fall like this one of the princes!”

The praises of the honored dead have been, here and elsewhere, fitly spoken. The beautifully blended benignity, dignity, simplicity, and purity of the husband, the father, and the friend; the integrity, sagacity, and energy of the statesman; the compressed intenseness and the direct and rapid logic of the orator; all these have been vividly portrayed by those who themselves illustrate what they describe. There seems still to linger around this hall echoes of the voices, which have so faithfully sketched the

life, so happily discriminated the powers, and so affectionately eulogized the virtues of the departed, that the muse of history will note down the words, as the outline of her future lofty narrative, her nice analysis, and her glowing praise.

But the echo of those eulogies dies away. All that was mortal of their honored object lies here unconscious, in the theatre of his glory. “Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye”—*there he lies!* that strong heart still, that bright eye dim. Another voice claims your ear. The minister of God, standing over the dead, is sent to say—“Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High, *but* ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.” He is sent to remind you that there are those here, not visible to the eye of sense, who are greater than the greatest of ye all—even DEATH, and DEATH’S LORD AND MASTER.

Death is here. I see him stand over his prostrate victim, and grimly smile, and shake at us his unsated spear, and bid us all attend this day on him. He is King to-day, and leads us all captive in his train, to swell his triumph and proclaim his power. And there is no visitant that can stand before the soul of man, with such claims on his awed, intent, and teachable attention. When, as on a day and in a scene like this, he holds us in his presence and bids us hear him—who can dare to disregard his mandate? Oh, there is no thought or fact, having reference to this brief scene of things, however, it may come with a port and tone of dignity and power, which does not dwindle into meanness, in the presence of that great



thought, that great fact, which has entered and darkened the Capitol to-day — DEATH ! To make us see that by a law perfectly inevitable and irresistible, soul and body are soon to separate ; that this busy scene of earth is to be suddenly and forever left ; that this human heart is to break through the circle of warm, congenial, familiar and fostering sympathies and associations, and to put off, all alone, into the silent dark — this is the object of the dread message to us of death. And as that message is spoken to a soul which is conscious of sin ; which knows that it has not within itself resources for self-purification, and self-sustaining peace and joy ; which realizes, in the very core of its conscience, retribution as a moral law ; it comes fraught with the unrest which causes it to be at once dismissed, or which lodges it in the soul, a visitant whose first coming is gloom, but whose continued presence shall be glory. Then the anxious spirit, peering out with intense earnestness into the dark unknown, may in vain question earth of the destiny of the soul, and lift to heaven the passionate invocation —

“ Answer me, burning stars of night,  
Where hath the spirit gone ;  
Which, past the reach of mortal sight,  
E'en as a breeze hath flown ? ”

And the stars answer him, “ We roll  
In pomp and power on high ;  
But of the never dying soul,  
Ask things that cannot die ! ”

“ Things that cannot die ! ” God only can tell us of the spirit-world. He assures us, by his Son, that death is

the child of sin. He tells us what is the power of this king of terrors. He shows us that in sinning "Adam all die." He declares to us that, sinful by nature and by practice, we are condemned to death; that we are consigned to woe; that we are unfit for heaven; that the condition of the soul which remains thus condemned and unchanged, is far drearier and more dreadful beyond, than this side, the grave. No wonder that men shrink from converse with death; for all his messages are woeful and appalling.

But, thanks be to God! though death be here, so also is death's Lord and Master. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That Saviour, Christ, assures us that all who repent, and forsake their sins, and believe in him, and live to him, shall rise to a life glorious and eternal, with Him and His, in Heaven. He tells us that if we are his, those sharp shafts which death rattles in our ears to-day, shall but transfix, and only for a season, the garment of our mortality; and that the emancipated spirits of the righteous shall be borne, on angel wings, to that peaceful paradise where they shall enjoy perpetual rest and felicity. Then it need not be a gloomy message which we deliver to you to-day, that "ye shall die as men and fall like one of the princes;" for it tells us that the humblest of men may be made equal to the angels; and that earth's princes may become "kings and priests unto God!"

In the presence of these simplest yet grandest truths; with these thoughts of death and the conqueror of death;

with this splendid trophy of his power proudly held up to our view by death, I need utter to you no commonplace on the vanity of our mortal life, the inevitableness of its termination, and the solemnities of our after-being. Here and now, on this theme, the silent dead is preaching to you more impressively than could the most eloquent of the living. You feel now, in your inmost heart, that that great upper range of things with which you are connected as immortals ; that moral administration of God, who stretches over the infinite of existence ; that magnificent system of ordered governments, to whose lower circle we now belong, which consists of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, which rise,

“Orb o’er orb, and height o’er height,”

to the enthroned Supreme ;—you feel that this, your high relation to the Infinite and Eternal, makes poor and low the most august and imposing scenes and dignities of earth, which flit, like shadows, through your three-score years and ten. Oh happy will it be, if the vivid sentiment of the hour become the actuating conviction of the life ! Happy will it be, if it take its place in the centre of the soul, and inform all its thoughts, feelings, principles, and aims ! Then shall this lower system of human things be consciously linked to, and become part of, and take glory from that spiritual sphere, which, all unseen, encloses us, whose actors and heroes are “angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven.” Then would that be permanently and habitually felt by all, which was here and

in the other chamber yesterday so eloquently expressed, that "vain are the personal strifes and party contests in which you daily engage, in view of the great account which you may all so soon be called upon to render ;"\* and that "it is unbecoming and presumptuous in those who are the tenants of an hour in this earthly abode, to wrestle and struggle together with a violence which would not be justifiable if it were your perpetual home."† Then, as we see to-day, the sister States, by their Representatives, linked hand in hand, in mournful attitude, around the bier of one in whose fame they all claim a share, we should look upon you as engaged in a sacrament of religious patriotism, whose spontaneous, unpremeditated vow, springing consentient from all your hearts, and going up unitedly to heaven, would be — "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable !"

But I must no longer detain you. May we all

"So live, that when our summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
We go not like the quarry-slave at night  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach the grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

\* Mr. Winthrop's speech in the House of Representatives.

† Mr. Clay's speech in the Senate.

“LIFE A TALE THAT IS TOLD.”



# A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY, JULY 14,

ON THE

# DEATH OF ZACHARY TAYLOR,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.



## IV.

### DISCOURSE.

WE SPEND OUR YEARS AS A TALE THAT IS TOLD: Psalm xc. 9.

THE psalm from which these words are taken is full of beautiful and affecting illustrations of the frailty and brevity of the life of man, in contrast with the eternity and stability of God. A thousand years are, in the sight of God, as yesterday when it is passed. Our life is as a flood — a rapid mountain torrent — raging and rushing, but soon spent. It is even as a sleep, in which, insensible to the realities around us, we are busy with the shifting unrealities of a dream. It is as grass that flourisheth in the morning; but is cut down, dried up, and withered in the evening. It is like a tale, to listen to which a group gathers around the story-teller of the East. For a few moments the narrative occupies and interests the spectators; the incidents rapidly succeed each other; the plot gathers; the catastrophe is announced; the voice of the narrator is hushed; the crowd disperse; the tale is told: even thus we spend our years!

1. Life is like a tale that is told *in the intensity of its interest*. There is nothing so interesting and thrilling as the true history of the human soul. A great German



writer has remarked "that the real *inner* history of the humblest man is a more momentous and thrilling thing than the *external* history of the greatest." I have no doubt that the history of the heart and mind, the struggles, temptations, fears, joys and agonies, of the humblest soldier who fell at Waterloo, if we could get at the story in all its fullness, would more profoundly move us than the most glowing and vivid description of the charging and shouting squadrons, the thunder of the artillery, and the wailings of the wounded and dying thousands. The tale of real or fictitious life which moves us most, is that which most fully develops and most truthfully displays the workings of human passion and affection. Every man's life, then, whatever may be his position, is like a tale that is told in the wonderfully interesting character of its incidents. The truth of his story is stranger than the fiction of many a wild romance. The Lears, and the Othellos, and the Macbeths, the men and women of Shakspeare, of Scott, and other masters, thrill the world's heart most, only because they come nearest to being true copies of the men and women who are about you. If you could look into the naked hearts of those who are sitting near you this morning, and read the true tale that their years tell, you would be tempted to throw aside the works of the masters of human passion, and call them tame and bungling.

And the life of every man has this intensity of interest from circumstances which give to tales constructed by human art and imagination their power to excite and



please. The Epic, the Drama, and the Romance select the crisis, the hour, and the place, into which are crowded those grand and decisive incidents, for which a long series of events has prepared, and on which momentous consequences depend. The life of man here below is the crisis, the turning point, of an eternal destiny. Oh! there is no tale so truly thrilling as that of a human soul on probation for eternity; no "gorgeous tragedy comes sweeping by" with such a train of momentous incidents and august characters. An immortal soul comes on the stage of being, in a condemned and polluted state. Its ordinary limit of mortal life is three-score years and ten; and at any period short of that, it is liable to be cut off suddenly, and in an instant. Then it is to commence an eternity of intense and growing bliss, or an eternity of sharp and increasing woe. Now in this little life, so short, so uncertain, it is to be determined what shall be the destiny of the soul. Mighty actors and transcendent scenes are connected with this true, ever-repeated story of the human soul and its destiny. For its salvation the Son of God becomes incarnate; for its recovery into purity and peace, the Spirit of God visits it with heavenly power. That it may be saved, it has been set all around with the agencies and influences of grace which are ever appealing to it and plying it, and striving to win it away from woe. And all providential dispensations are arranged for this object; all that the human spirit does and suffers has a bearing on the grand and ultimate result. What momentous interest should invest every incident and expe-

rience which bears on that great catastrophe. Oh! there is no tale of wonder, of stirring incident, of momentous issues, of fearful catastrophes, like this! Angels listen to each new tale of man's life and fate with absorbed and unabated interest. If it issue in the recovery of the lost soul, then there is joy over it amid the angels of God. Let it be told how it may—with the inspired and seraphic earnestness of St. Paul; with the gorgeous eloquence of Milton; with the vivid intensity and realization of Bunyan; or with the feeble lips and stammering tongue of the humblest minister of Jesus—it is a tale second in intensity of interest to none ever told in the history of God's universe, the story of that which transpires in the fleeting years "rounded by a dream" which make up the mortal life of every man.

2. Our life is like a tale that is told *in its vicissitudes and changes*. Separate from what may be called the caprices of fortune, the very law of our being bears us on into the midst of ever new and shifting scenes. We ourselves are changing; and all things around us change. We are one thing in childhood, another in youth, another in maturity, and another still in advancing years. The story of our life hurries on through incessant changes. Now it is childhood with us; and that is the period when, to the most vivid enjoyment of the present, there is added the most ardent and *confident*, because not yet disappointed, hope of the future. The scenes which surround our childhood are all beautiful to us because bathed in the glorifying light of the morning. It seems that but an

hour they were with us — those young companions, that pleasant home, those playmate brothers and sisters, those wanderings in the wood, those sailings on the little brook, the river, or the sea, those enterprises and inventions, and supposed romantic adventures, in carrying on of which there was an amount and intensity and vehemence of interest, which the hackneyed statesman might in vain wish he could feel in the fate of States. Ah! they were with us but an hour! Then the scene of our life-story shifted, and our hearts were agitated with alternations of passion, hope, grief, and joy; and we were moving in the midst of scenes which promised much, but gave little; whose “pleasures did not please;” whose joys were too tumultuous to give real satisfaction, and whose capabilities and experiences of suffering were manifold and acute. Then, after the fitful fever of youth had abated, we betook ourselves to the real business, as we supposed it to be, of life. And now, with many, the period of old age approaches, when the sad spirit, bereft of most of its old associates and associations, goes back and wanders among the graves of the past, and writes on them tender epitaphs, and hangs over them the faded wreaths of affection, which they are no longer permitted to bind on living brows. Yes, our life passes in the midst of strange and rapid vicissitudes. At one period we are prosperous and happy, surrounded by parents, children, and friends. At another we are stripped and destitute, distant from the homes of our youth, lonely and uncared for. We are wearied of perpetual

change. We would fain pause for a time where we are, even though it be not in the place of our preference.

Restless time, who ne'er abidest :  
 Driver, who life's chariot guidest  
 O'er dark hills and vales that smile,  
 Let me, let me breathe awhile !  
 Whither dost thou hasten ? say !  
 Driver, but an instant stay !

Swifter than the lightning flies  
 All things vanish from my eyes :  
 All that rose so brightly o'er me,  
 Like pale mist wreaths fade before me ;  
 Every spot my glance can find,  
 Thy impatience leaves behind.

Yesterday thy wild steeds flew  
 O'er a spot where roses grew ;  
 These I sought to gather blindly,  
 But thou hurriedst on unkindly ;  
 The buds by thy wild wheels were torn,  
 And I grasped the naked thorn.

Driver, turn thee quickly back,  
 On the self-same beaten track,  
 I of late *so much* neglected,  
 Lost, forgot, condemned, rejected —  
 That I still each scene would trace,  
 Slacken thy bewildering pace !

To *the grave* ! ah, only there,  
 Through the storms that rend the air,  
 Doth thy rugged pathway tend,  
 There all pain and sorrow end ;  
 There repose's goal is won : —  
 Driver ! speed, in God's name, on !

3. "Our life is like a tale that is told," *in the fact that we can gather up the history of the past into a compass which shall scarcely exceed the period allotted for the telling of a tale.* A story which occupies but an hour in the recital, will cover over a period of years. Even such

is the story of our life. Very little of it remains with us. All that even we consider to be important could be told before this day's sun should set. Whole days and weeks of it are lost to the memory — days and weeks filled with activity, with emotion, with the reception and the conveyance of influences which are even yet operating on our own character, or that of others. If we have kept no written record of the days that are past, or if no circumstances of peculiar interest have impressed them upon the memory, we might in vain endeavor to talk with many of the hours and days and weeks of our former life, and ask them what report they bore to heaven. Looking back upon the long perspective of the past, times and incidents which were indeed wide apart, seem to touch and mingle into one. This is, no doubt, the reason why life seems so strangely brief in the retrospect. This it is which makes our life appear to have been unprofitable and vain. This it is that makes us sadly ask if God has made all men for nought. This it is which vindicates the sacred writers from the charge of exaggeration and extravagance when they say of life that it is even as a sleep, as a flying post, as a rushing torrent, as a morning flower, as a tale that is told.

This is a view of the present state of existence which is, to a thoughtful mind, very sad and solemn. We can carry forward with us so little of the wealth of experience, of wisdom, and of enjoyment, which we gather in our onward progress through the world! — Something indeed we carry with us; but more we leave and are



compelled to leave behind. How many acquisitions we must drop by the way! How many lessons of wisdom do we fail to bear with us! With how many sweet hours of peaceful happiness must we part forever! Like armies that are compelled to leave much of their spoil behind them that they may move forward, we are under the necessity of dropping and burying and bidding adieu to many precious things that we would fain bear with us, that we may advance on the march, and be about the pressing business of life. If we could select and carry forward with us all the best spoils and treasures and happiness of the past, and leave behind all that impedes our movement, then it seems that ours would be a triumphal march, and that we should pass forward in conquest over all obstacles — “terrible as an army with banners.” But alas! it seems to be the sad condition of our mortal state, that we cannot bear forward with us and perpetuate the pleasurable experiences of life. If we do carry with us vivid memories of departed joys, the experience of all the world attest that they are mournful, though fascinating to the heart. The most that the true interpreters of the human heart have dared to say of them is, they are pleasant *and mournful* to the soul. But while we cannot reproduce the joys of the past, and in the attempt do but convert them, for the most part, into present sorrows, we cannot avoid taking with us the bitter and painful experiences of life. The regretful memory of duty neglected — how often it reappears! The reproach of conscience for wrong committed — how fre-

quently it is repeated! The sorrows of bereavement—how mournfully are they lived over and over again. Yes, we leave behind us most of the treasures and the spoils of our life-march; but we must carry with us the baggage and the burden! Now when, in our retrospect of life, all the past seems to consist of a few incidents and eras, and when those chapters that remain to the memory consist chiefly of painful passages, the pleasant having been expunged, or having become painful because no more to be repeated, we are compelled to exclaim with the Psalmist, “we spend our years as it were a tale, ‘a sorrowful tale,’ that is told.”

4. Our life is like a tale that is told *in the uncertainty of its catastrophe*. While a story is in progress, we know not whether its termination will be sad or joyful. I deny not that in the prescience and the determination of God, the catastrophe is foreseen and prefixed; for, in the language of Sir Thomas Brown—“to his eternity, which is indivisible and all together, the last trump is already sounded, the reprobates in flames, and the blessed in Abraham’s bosom.” But that is a range of truth which is above us—“far above, out of sight;” with which we have practically, as responsible probationers for eternity, little, if any thing, to do. The range of truth with which we have to do, is that revealed system of grace and salvation, which calls on all men to repent, believe, and live; which proffers grace to all who ask it and look for it in the way of God’s promise and appointment; which charges home on every man, under this system, the guilt

and the fault of his perdition, if he be not saved. Looking at man, then, under this remedial system, we say that the catastrophe of his life-story is yet uncertain and undetermined. We have to do and to act upon that system of revealed dispensations in which, even when Christians, we are warned to abide in the love of Christ, and "to beware lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;" a system under which all are bidden to "work out salvation with fear and trembling;" and in which even St. Paul expressed a dread lest he should be a "castaway." Under such a system, then, we may say that the catastrophe of each man's life is yet in suspense. Oh! what a thrilling interest does it impart to the life of every man, however tame its incidents, when we know that it is to issue in an eternal blessedness or woe! The record of your mere human affections and passions, hopes and fears, delights and sorrows, vicissitudes and incidents, would constitute a story of affecting interest. But when all these are mixed up with and enter into and constitute a portion of a tale of an immortal destiny; when with them there is God's truth before your mind, and God's grace at your conscience and your heart; when heaven and hell are set before you for your choice and decision; and while you are deferring that choice, death is seen to dog your unconscious foot-steps, and to be preparing to strike the blow that shall determine a catastrophe of unending wretchedness — Oh! how unspeakably painful is then the interest with which the issue of such a state



of things is contemplated by those who see and would avert the coming doom! Your life is not the poor thing of tame events which you make it or regard it. It is a history of immortal interests which is written fast as it transpires, on the tablets of eternity, and read with wonder by the angels. I appeal to your inmost, smothered, silenced consciousness to confess that it is so! I invoke those thoughts of death; those fears of judgment; those sighings of the heart for better things; those fettered energies, which are ever crying out in the soul, "give us room and freedom;" those secret unpremeditated and vague impressions, that you have powers which do not find fit fields for their exertions, affections which do not, in all their gropings, rest on the objects for which they were bestowed; that lonely feeling which no human affections can remove, and which would tell you, if you would hear, that it arises from the fact that you are cut off from God: I invoke these impressions and experiencies of your soul, as witnesses to yourselves, that while you are endeavoring to amuse yourselves with the frivolous story of your daily outside life, there is transpiring in your spirit a history more momentous than that of an Empire.

My friends and brethren: A thrilling and heroic tale has just been told among you—a noble life has closed! It was a story stirring with incident, beautiful with soft and tender affections, glorious with triumph and success. It presents the loved and honored actor, now in the domestic circle, now in the tented field, now in the chair of State, now on the bed of agony and death, but every

where and always the upright, the kind, the firm, the gentle, the warm, the hearty man whose life has won, and whose death has rent, a nation's heart. To this congregation, familiar with his public career and witnesses of the daily beauty of his life, I need not dimly sketch the history and the traits of character of the late President of the United States, which are now upon every lip, and are pictured with a peculiarly vivid distinctness upon *your* memories and hearts. The task has been elsewhere and well performed. Nor will I strive to give expression to that deep grief which, strongest here, where he best was known, is no where weak, and which, on this day, devoted to the commemoration of his death in every city and hamlet of the land, palpitates in the hearts and trembles upon the lips of millions. No burning words of preacher or of poet could give fit utterance to the mighty woe! Nor may I intrude upon the sacred privacy of that late bright and happy but now desolate and stricken home, where "out of the strong came forth sweetness," where the departed exemplified those dear charities of life which make greatness greater, and the want of which no greatness can supply—I may not intrude into that sorrowing group except to convey to them, from your pastor and from you, their more immediate associates and friends, the respectful and affectionate sympathy which has invoked upon their hearts the best gifts of that Spirit whose name is *Comforter*. If your prayers and the prayers of a nation had availed, our Father had not died!

Leaving these more personal considerations to other speakers and other occasions, let me gather up a few of the impressive lessons which this dispensation so emphatically teaches — lessons which may be applied to us and by us, whatever may be our position and circumstances in life.

1. We are taught by the career and character of our departed President, that those qualities which win wide and permanent admiration and regard are *moral qualities*. Men, often deceived, love one who is ever true; often injured, they love one who is ever just; often treated with selfish cruelty, they love one who is ever generous, affectionate, and magnanimous. They long, *after repeated disappointments*, to find these qualities in the world. They learn to value them as those which are in themselves noblest, and those on which their own happiness and the happiness of all most depend. Often when they suppose themselves to have found these qualities, they are deceived. Now, when they find the man in whom these traits appear—when these and kindred virtues are developed in their highest forms, and have been put to the severest tests, over and over again, and never have been found wanting—there springs up in all who know him who is thus proved, a true esteem, a joyful confidence, a high regard, an enthusiastic affection. It is such comfort to human hearts to rest upon something which will not, and which we are sure will not give way! When men have reached this assurance with regard to an individual, they go forth crying out with delight to their friends and neighbors, “we have found

him! we have found him!" they gather about him with generous confidence and devotion; in an hour of peril and of battle they lift him upon their shields and hail him chief! and in the hour of victory, they rejoice to pour in upon him the full and rapturous enthusiasm of their nature. Let us all remember, that, whether our sphere be large or small, it is these moral qualities alone which will win for us, in it, permanent and true regard.

2. Nor less emphatically does the career of the illustrious deceased teach us wherein lies *true power*. I suppose that it will be granted, without disparagement to any, that in no one living great man in this land was there garnered up more of what in this country we call *power*, than in that modest, kindly, unpretending man whose vacant seat in the house of God to-day tells you that you shall see his face no more.\* It shows that power depends on *character* more than on intellectual ability. The deceased possessed, indeed, a discriminating and a solid understanding; but not therein was the hiding of his power. "Knowledge," it is said, "is power." It were more accurate, it seems to me, to say that it is the fit and consummate instrument of power. It is the furbished sword fitted for the work; but the power *which gives it power*, is in the strong arm that wields it. It is not, then, knowledge or intellectual ability alone which constitutes power; but it is that which lies back of it and uses it—that purity of purpose, that singleness of aim, that steadiness of principle, that true heartedness of feeling, that iron

\* The pew of the late President was clothed in mourning and was unoccupied.

energy of will—all that, in short, which constitutes character, and which uses knowledge and ability for noble purposes—it is here that power sits throned. It is not enough for us merely to hear good words and see great deeds, to assure us that they are the doings and utterances of power; we want to see *what kind of a man is behind them*, before we can determine whether there is real power in the things done or uttered. The same words and deeds have not the same power, and indeed are not the same, by whomsoever and howsoever they are done or spoken, but are great and glorious in proportion to the true greatness and glory of the speaker or the doer. Yes, let us remember that in *character* is power; and not in mere mental ability and acquisition. The lesser knowledge and the humbler mind are more powerful when worked by a true heart and a will resolute for the right, than are splendid powers and vast attainments under the guidance of an irresolute, weak, corrupt, and capricious character. It is this that makes David's sling mightier than Goliath's spear.

3. And let us learn from this dispensation and the feelings and incidents which have accompanied it, a lesson of hope in reference to the public weal. Surely this sad dispensation has been marked by incidents and feelings which should inspire us with new hopes for the union and peace of our beloved land. The quiet transfer of the vast power of the Executive without murmur, remonstrance, or excitement, is evidence that we love our Constitution and our laws. The fraternal feelings awakened



by this visitation in the representatives of every portion of this vast Republic, prove that at heart, however local interests may temporarily alienate our affections, we love one another. Over the grave of our departed Father, the man of the Union, the nation has been made to feel that it indeed is one. There has been no disposition on the part of Israel to say angrily to Judah, "we have ten parts in the king, and we have more right in David than ye." All have felt that they had in him an equal part and an equal right; and that he must never belong to less or to any other, than that one broad and undivided Republic, which now together pays him the tribute of their united gratitude and sorrow. It was of old a custom to connect solemn oaths and compacts with the offering up of a sacrifice. And yesterday, when this illustrious victim was laid, as it were upon the altar, and the States, by their representatives, gathered around it, and a glow of fraternal feeling pervaded all the assemblage, I could not refrain from saying to myself, "The sacrifice is prepared; the hearts of the parties to a renewed solemn national covenant are now all eager and ready; in their silent spirits, the oath of new allegiance and fraternal love is breathed; and THE UNION SHALL BE SECURED! God grant it may be so; for civilization, liberty, prosperity, peace, religion, and the hopes of coming millions hang trembling on the issue!"

4. And more important than all, this event teaches us the fact of our mortality in the most emphatic and affecting terms. The lessons of our mortality are written on

life's every page, and we must read them, or close our eyes. But when a great man falls the lesson is written in blazoned capitals, and hung up before our eyes and the world's, and its glare forces us to see and read it. Let us then prepare for that life beyond the present, which God in his mercy has provided for the penitent, and believing, and obedient. If we are in Christ, we may be ready for the hour of death and the day of judgment. Are you yet young? Is your "life a tale" that is just begun? Oh, ennoble all its incidents, and give to its progress a healthful and happy character, by connecting with it now, and weaving into it as the pervading element of its power and beauty, the name of your Saviour! Are you more advanced in life? Has the story of your existence become complicated and tedious with petty incidents and common-place events; and do you, with listless indifference, turn page after page of the life-tale on which frivolity, unrest, and inanity are written? Be assured it will be so even to the end, if there be not introduced upon it a name of power—the name of your Saviour. Then the narrative which crept shall soar! Then the scene of your being, the object of your life, the end towards which you tend, will all become glorified and changed. Is old age upon you? Is the story of your life almost ended? Are the last words of it falling on the ear of your friends and of the world? Have the characters which figured in its earlier or later chapters, dropped off one by one—the playmates of your childhood, the parents of your youth, the children of your maturity, the actors with you



in the stirring scenes of middle life—have they departed, and left you to totter off the stage desolate and alone? Ah! what is there then left for you, but to close up the story of your mortal life with the experience of a Saviour's love? Though that life may have been honorable and useful in the world's regard; though it may have been glorious with the triumph of intellect and ambition; though it may be such a tale as thrills a nation's heart with rapture, and such as after times may eagerly peruse, yet as the history of an immortal, it may be but a tale of sorrow and of woe, if its concluding sentences end not with the names of our God and Saviour!

The Strong Staff Broken and the Beautiful Rod.



# A DISCOURSE,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

FUNERAL OF THE HON. HENRY CLAY,

DELIVERED IN THE

SENATE CHAMBER OF THE UNITED STATES, JULY 1, 1852.



## V.

### D I S C O U R S E.

HOW IS THE STRONG STAFF BROKEN, AND THE BEAUTIFUL ROD: Jer. xlviii. 17.

Before all hearts and minds in this august assemblage the vivid image of *one man* stands. To some aged eye he may come forth, from the dim past, as he appeared in the neighboring city of his native State, a lithe and ardent youth, full of promise, of ambition, and of hope. To another he may appear as, in a distant State, in the courts of justice, erect, high-strung, bold, wearing the fresh forensic laurel on his young and open brow. Some may see him in the earlier, and some in the later, stages of his career, on this conspicuous theatre of his renown; and to the former he will start out on the background of the past, as he appeared in the neighboring chamber, tall, elate, impassioned — with flashing eye, and suasive gesture, and clarion voice, an already acknowledged “Agamemnon, King of Men;” and to others he will again stand in this chamber, “the strong staff” of the bewildered and staggering State, and “the beautiful rod,” rich with the blossoms of genius, and of patriotic love and hope, the life of youth still remaining to give animation, grace, and exhaust-

less vigor, to the wisdom, the experience, and the gravity of age. To others he may be present as he sat in the chamber of sickness, cheerful, majestic, gentle — his mind clear, his heart warm, his hope fixed on Heaven, peacefully preparing for his last great change. To the memory of the minister of God he appears as the penitent, humble, and peaceful Christian, who received him with the affection of a father, and joined with him in solemn sacrament and prayer, with the gentleness of a woman, and the humility of a child. “Out of the strong came forth sweetness.” “How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!”

But not before this Assembly only, does the venerated image of the departed Statesman, this day, distinctly stand. For more than a thousand miles—east, west, north, and south—it is known and remembered that at this place and hour a nation’s Representatives assemble to do honor to him whose fame is now a nation’s heritage. A nation’s mighty heart throbs against this Capitol, and beats through you. In many cities banners droop, bells toll, cannons boom, funereal draperies wave. In crowded streets and on sounding wharfs, upon steamboats and upon cars, in fields and in workshops, in homes, in schools, millions of men, women, and children have their thoughts fixed upon this scene, and say mournfully to each other, “This is the hour in which, at the Capitol, the nation’s Representatives are burying Henry Clay.” *Burying HENRY CLAY!* Bury the records of your country’s history—bury the hearts of living millions—bury the mountains, the rivers, the lakes, and the spreading lands from

sea to sea, with which his name is inseparably associated, and even then you would not bury HENRY CLAY—for he lives in other lands, and speaks in other tongues, and to other times than ours.

A great mind, a great heart, a great orator, a great career, have been consigned to history. She will record his rare gifts of deep insight, keen discrimination, clear statement, rapid combination, plain, direct, and convincing logic. She will love to dwell on that large, generous, magnanimous, open, forgiving heart. She will linger with fond delight on the recorded and traditional stories of an eloquence that was so masterful and stirring, because it was but *himself*, struggling to come forth on the living words—because, though the words were brave and strong, and beautiful and melodious, it was felt that behind them there was a *soul* braver, stronger, more beautiful and more melodious, than language could express. She will point to a career of statesmanship which has, to a remarkable degree, stamped itself on the public policy of the country, and reached, in beneficent practical results, the fields, the looms, the commercial marts, and the quiet homes of all the land, where his name was, with the departed fathers, and is, with the living children, and will be, with successive generations, an honored household word.

I feel, as a man, the grandeur of his career. But as an immortal, with this broken wreck of mortality before me, with this scene as the “end-all” of human glory, I feel that no career is truly great but that of him

who, whether he be illustrious or obscure, lives to the future in the present, and linking himself to the spiritual world, draws from God the life, the rule, the motive and the reward of all his labor. So would that great spirit which has departed say to us, could he address us now. So did he realize in the calm and meditative close of life. I feel that I but utter the lessons which, living, were his last and best convictions, and which, dead, would be, could he speak to us, his solemn admonitions, when I say that statesmanship is then only glorious, when it is *Christian*: and that man is then only safe, and true to his duty and his soul, when the life which he lives in the flesh is the life of faith in the Son of God.

Great, indeed, is the privilege, and most honorable and useful is the career, of a Christian American statesman. He perceives that civil liberty came from the freedom wherewith Christ made its early martyrs and defenders free. He recognizes it as one of the twelve manner of fruits on the Tree of Life, which, while its lower branches furnish the best nutriment of earth, hangs on its topmost boughs, which wave in Heaven, fruits that exhilarate the immortals. Recognizing the State as God's institution, he will perceive that his own ministry is divine. Living consciously under the eye, and in the love and fear of God; redeemed by the blood of Jesus; sanctified by his Spirit; loving his law; he will give himself, in private and in public, to the service of his Saviour. He will not admit that he may act on less lofty principles in public, than in private life; and that he must be careful of his



moral influence in the small sphere of home and neighborhood, but need take no heed of it when it stretches over continents and crosses seas. He will know that his moral responsibility cannot be divided and distributed among others. When he is told that adherence to the strictest moral and religious principle is incompatible with a successful and eminent career, he will denounce the assertion as a libel on the venerated Fathers of the Republic — a libel on the honored living and the illustrious dead — a libel against a great and Christian nation — a libel against God himself, who has declared and made “godliness profitable for the life that now is.” He will strive to make laws the transcripts of the character, and institutions illustrations of the providence, of God. He will scan with admiration and awe the purposes of God in the future history of the world, in throwing open this wide Continent, from sea to sea, as the abode of freedom, intelligence, plenty, prosperity, and peace; and feel that in giving his energies with a patriot’s love to the welfare of his country, he is consecrating himself with a Christian’s zeal to the extension and establishment of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Compared with a career like this, which is equally open to those whose public sphere is large or small, how paltry are the trade of patriotism, the tricks of statesmanship, the reward of successful baseness! This hour, this scene, the venerated dead, the country, the world, the present, the future, God, duty, Heaven, hell, speak trumpet-tongued to all in the service

of their country, to *beware* how they lay polluted or unhallowed hands

“Upon the ark  
Of her magnificent and awful cause?”

Such is the character of that statesmanship which alone would have met the full approval of the venerated dead. For the religion which always had a place in the convictions of his mind, had also within a recent period entered into his experience, and seated itself in his heart. Twenty years since he wrote — “I am a member of no religious sect, and I am not a professor of religion. I regret that I am not. I wish that I was, and trust that I shall be. I have, and always have had, a profound regard for Christianity, the religion of my fathers, and for its rites, its usages, and observances.” That feeling proved that the seed sown by pious parents was not dead, though stifled. A few years since, its dormant life was reäwakened. He was baptized in the communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and during his sojourn in this city, he was in full communion with Trinity Parish.

It is since his withdrawal from the sittings of the Senate that I have been made particularly acquainted with his religious opinions, character, and feelings. From the commencement of his illness he always expressed to me his persuasion that its termination would be fatal. From that period until his death, it was my privilege to hold frequent religious services and conversations with him in his room. He avowed to me his full faith in the great leading doctrines of the Gospel—the fall and sinfulness

of man, the divinity of Christ, the reality and necessity of the Atonement, the need of being born again by the Spirit, and salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer. His own personal hopes of salvation he ever and distinctly based on the promises and the grace of Christ. Strikingly perceptible, on his naturally impetuous and impatient character, was the influence of grace in producing submission, and "a patient waiting for Christ," and for death. On one occasion he spoke to me of the pious example of one very near and dear to him, as that which led him deeply to feel, and earnestly to seek for himself, the reality and blessedness of religion. On another occasion he told me that he had been striving to form a conception of Heaven; and he enlarged upon the mercy of that provision by which our Saviour became a partaker of our humanity, that our hearts and hopes might fix themselves on him. On another occasion, when he was supposed to be very near his end, I expressed to him the hope that his mind and heart were at peace, and that he was able to rest with cheerful confidence on the promises and in the merits of the Redeemer. He said, with much feeling, that he endeavored to and trusted that he did repose his salvation upon Christ; that it was too late for him to look at Christianity in the light of speculation; that he had never doubted of its truth; and that he now wished to throw himself upon it as a practical and blessed remedy. Very soon after this I administered to him the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Being extremely feeble and desirous of having his mind undiverted, no persons were present but his son and his

servant. It was a scene long to be remembered. There, in that still chamber, at a week-day noon, the tides of life flowing all around us, three disciples of the Saviour, the minister of God, the dying statesman and his servant, a partaker of the like precious faith, commemorated their Saviour's dying love. He joined in the blessed sacrament with great feeling and solemnity, now pressing his hands together, and now spreading them forth, as the words of the service expressed the feelings, desires, supplications, confessions and thanksgivings, of his heart. His eyes were dim with grateful tears, his heart was full of peace and love! After this he rallied, and again I was permitted frequently to join with him in religious services, conversation and prayer. He grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Among the books which, in connection with the Word of God, he read most, were "Jay's Morning and Evening Exercises," the "Life of Dr. Chalmers," and "The Christian Philosopher Triumphant in Death." His hope continued to the end to be, though true and real, tremulous with humility rather than rapturous with assurance. When he felt most the weariness of his protracted sufferings, it sufficed to suggest to him that his Heavenly Father doubtless knew, that after a life so long and stirring, and tempted, such a discipline of chastening and suffering was needful to make him more meet for the inheritance of the saints—and at once words of meek and patient acquiescence escaped his lips.

Exhausted nature at length gave way. On the last occasion when I was permitted to offer a brief prayer at his bedside, his last words to me were that he had hope only in Christ, and that the prayer which I had offered for his pardoning love, and his sanctifying grace, included every thing which the dying need. On the evening previous to his departure, sitting for an hour in silence by his side, I could not but realize, when I heard him, in the slight wanderings of his mind to other days, and other scenes, murmuring the words, "*My mother! Mother! Mother!*" and saying "*My dear wife!*" as if she were present, and frequently uttering aloud, as if in response to some silent Litany of the soul, the simple prayer, "Lord have mercy upon me!"—I could not but realize then, and rejoice to think how near was the blessed reunion of his weary heart with the loved dead, and with her—Our dear Lord gently smooth her passage to the tomb!—who must soon follow him to his rest—whose spirits even then seemed to visit, and to cheer his memory and his hope. Gently he breathed his soul away into the spirit world.

"How blest the righteous when they die!  
When holy souls retire to rest,  
How mildly beams the closing eye,  
How gently heaves the expiring breast!"

"So fades the summer cloud away,  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies the wave upon the shore!"

Be it ours to follow him, in the same humble and submissive faith, to Heaven. Could he speak to us the counsels of his latest human and his present Heavenly experience, sure I am that he would not only admonish us to cling to the Saviour, in sickness and in death, but adjure us not to delay to act upon our first convictions, that we might give our best powers and fullest influence to God, and go to the grave with a hope unshadowed by the long worldliness of the past, or by the films of fear and doubt resting over the future.

The strong staff is broken, and the beautiful rod is despoiled of its grace and bloom ; but in the light of the eternal promises, and by the power of Christ's resurrection, we joyfully anticipate the prospect of seeing that broken staff erect, and that beautiful rod clothed with celestial grace, and blossoming with undying life and blessedness in the Paradise of God.

THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF HENRY CLAY.





## VI.

### A D D R E S S . \*

I PROPOSE to give a sketch of the life, character, statesmanship, eloquence, and more particularly of some of the closing days of Henry Clay. As it was my privilege to minister to him in his last sickness, and as there is a natural curiosity to know the bearing and feeling of great men in those scenes and circumstances which constitute the most momentous part of the life of all men, I trust I shall be excused on this occasion if I introduce more matter of a personal and of a religious character than is usual on such occasions as the present.

Every great name has its concrete of associations, and at once when it is pronounced awakens certain corresponding emotions. The true great names of the last forty years of our history—"the three mighties," Calhoun, Clay and Webster—awaken each characteristic feelings. There is a peculiar *ring* to each name as it falls on the ear and heart. That of Mr. Clay has a rousing, animating, triumphant tone. The name of Mr. Calhoun greets us like the clash of cymbals, clear, keen and cold. On

\* This was originally written as an article for a Review, and was afterwards modified and delivered as a Lecture.

the contrary, that of Mr. Clay comes to us like a rich, melodious blast of the bugle—cheerful, brave and hopeful—equally inspiring when sounding for a charge, or celebrating a victory, or giving the signal for an honorable retreat. The name of Mr. Webster suggests the booming of heavy artillery, which at the same time makes majestic music and does terrible execution. They were all great in heart, in intellect and in will; but in each these elements were differently and characteristically combined. While the will predominated in Mr. Calhoun, and the intellect in Mr. Webster, in Mr. Clay there was—and that was the secret of the intense devotion of his friends—a predominance of heart.

The chief incidents in the life of Mr. Clay are doubtless familiar to an audience like this, in his own adopted and adored Kentucky. I may therefore the more briefly touch upon it with a view to aid your memory rather than to add to your information.

Less is known of the youth and boyhood of Mr. Clay than our curiosity craves. He was the seventh child of the Rev. John Clay, and was born in Hanover County, Virginia, April 12, 1777. His parents were of English origin. His father was a man of great vigor and purity of character, and his mother a superior and estimable person. His mother was married the second time to Captain Henry Watkyns, a worthy man who appears to have appreciated and been kind to Henry. Little is known of his life until the fourteenth year of his age. Two glimpses of his boyhood are obtained. He passes momentarily

before us on his way to mill, mounted on the top of a bag thrown over a pony, with the rope-bridle in his hand, "The mill boy of the slashes;" and again we get a glimpse of him in the log school room of Mr. Peter Deacon, as a lank and loosely-knit boy, making his way in reading, writing and arithmetic, "as far as Practice."

In 1791, in his fourteenth year, he was placed in Mr. Richard Denny's store in Richmond. Here, however, he did not long remain. His step-father doubtless discerned his rare gifts. So we infer from the language of Colonel Tinsley, his intimate friend, to his brother Mr. Peter Tinsley, clerk of the high court of chancery of Virginia. When he applied for a situation in his office, Mr. Peter Tinsley said there was no opening for the lad. "Never mind," said the Colonel, "you must take him." Mr. Watkins and Colonel Tinsley had manifestly concluded that all Henry wanted was a chance and a start.

This *was* all he needed. And now behold him in the office of Mr. Tinsley among the dapper city clerks, a tall awkward boy in his suit of Virginia "pepper and salt" homespun, "the tail of his coat standing out from his legs," says Roland Thomas, the senior clerk, "at an angle of forty-five degrees, like that of a dragoon." The clerks exchanged knowing glances at each other and smiled at the green boy. But they soon found that he had a brain that was right royally and gorgeously appareled. He had a tongue which seldom failed to express more sense and wit than his pepper and salt suit could possibly call forth from them. It was not long before it was felt that he was the

“first,” though he was the last and youngest, of them all. The clerks went out in the evening to amuse themselves after the fatigues of the day, and left young Clay at his books, and found him there when they returned, and left him there when they went to bed.

There must have been something winning and attractive about this homespun boy to have drawn to him the notice, patronage and affection of the venerable chancellor Wythe, whose occupation frequently called him to Mr. Tinsley’s rooms. He obtained young Clay’s services as an amanuensis and secretary, and becoming attached to him and perceiving his great capacity, gave him the use of his library and superintended his legal education. He became the patron, friend and guide of the interesting and aspiring youth.

In the Rhetorical Society at Richmond at this period he at once took that position of LEADER, which he has ever since held in all the associations in which he has been placed.

Having been entered as a regular student at law in the office of Attorney General Brooke, he obtained a license to practice at the age of twenty. He immediately removed to Lexington, Kentucky; and after a few months of delay and preparation commenced the practice of the law at Lexington. Here he became at once conspicuous. A formidable competitor of the oldest and most distinguished members of the bar in Lexington, he continually added to the fame with which his entrance upon life was signalized, by his growing power and experience, his wonderful elocution,

his ready wit, his vigorous and clear argumentation and his generous and magnanimous character.

In 1799 he married Lucretia Hart, daughter of Colonel Thomas Hart of Lexington. By this lady he had eleven children, five sons and six daughters. Of these only two survive.

Mr. Clay first entered the field of politics during the administration of John Adams; and took a strong stand against the Federal party and in favor of Mr. Jefferson and his policy.

In 1803 Mr. Clay was elected a member of the State Legislature of Kentucky. In 1806 he was chosen to fill up the unexpired term of the Hon. John Adair in the United States Senate, who had resigned his seat. The term closed on the 4th of March 1807. At this early period he delivered a speech on Internal Improvement. In 1807 he was again elected a member and speaker of the Kentucky Legislature. After two sessions of service in that capacity he was again chosen for the United States' Senate for the unexpired term of the Hon. Buckner Thurston, resigned.

From this period the career of Mr. Clay became conspicuous and national. In 1811 he resigned his seat in the Senate that he might become a candidate for the House of Representatives, to which he was, by a triumphant majority, elected. The prospect of war with Great Britain excited his intense interest, and he desired a post of more popular influence than that of the Senate. He was elected Speaker of the House on the first ballot by a majority of



31 out of 128 members present. To this honorable post he was elected six times, viz. in 1811, 1813, 1815, 1817, 1819, 1823, and occupied the chair in all about ten years.

Here his great qualities as a Parliamentary leader were immediately displayed. He urged the prosecution of the war in a few speeches in which, as reported, we find more of force and less of splendor than we should have anticipated at that period of his life and upon a theme so congenial to his brilliant and daring character. "From the height of the chair," said Mr. Senator Hunter, "he ruled the House of Representatives by the energy of his will, and upon the level of the floor he exercised a control almost as absolute by the mastery of his intellect."

War was declared by the United States against Great Britain, June, 1812, Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun being its most active and efficient advocates. In May, 1813, his majority for speaker was 35. In January, 1814, he was appointed by President Madison one of the commissioners to negotiate a treaty of peace with Great Britain. The provisions of the treaty of Ghent were such as met with the general approbation of the country. None of the commissioners were more unyielding in the vindication of the rights of his countrymen than Mr. Clay.

During his absence in Europe Mr. Clay had again been elected a member of House of Representatives. His name is henceforth identified with the history of the country. In 1817, he was again elected Speaker by 140 votes, out of 155. During these sessions of



Congress Mr. Clay became the prominent champion of a system of protection to American manufactures, and a system of internal improvements, and the acknowledgment of the independence of the South American Republics. In 1819, Mr. Clay made his great speech against General Jackson for his conduct in the Seminole War. This was a crowded and splendid period of his career. Private affairs required his presence at home, and accordingly he resigned his office at the opening of the second session of Congress in 1820. On the 16th of January, 1821, he resumed his seat, and as a member of that body he effected the famous Missouri Compromise—a measure regarded by himself as one of the most important services which he ever rendered to his country.

In the 17th Congress Mr. Clay did not sit. Having somewhat restored the pecuniary losses to which he had been subjected, he again entered the 18th Congress in 1823; and was again elected Speaker. Previous to this period he had been named among the Candidates for the Presidency. The Legislature of Kentucky in 1822, and those of Missouri and Ohio in 1823, had nominated him to succeed Mr. Monroe in 1825.

No portion of our political history has been more canvassed than that in which Mr. Clay gave his influence to Mr. Adams against General Jackson, and afterwards became Secretary of State during his administration. The subject of the alleged conspiracy and corruption of Mr. Clay is treated at great length and much ability by his Biographer, Mr. Colton. It is believed that in the

light subsequently shed upon this transaction, by the individual who first made the charge of corruption, public sentiment has fully acquitted him of a crime, but convicted him of a mistake. Mr. Crawford wrote to him exonerating him from the charge of corruption, but adding—"Candor compels me to say that I disapproved of your accepting office under him."

Mr. Clay shone no less in the office of Secretary of State than in the position of Speaker and Member of the House. His business habits were prompt and accurate, and fitted him admirably for an administrative function.

After the election of General Jackson Mr. Clay resided on his farm in Ashland. In the autumn of 1831 he was elected to the Senate of the United States by the Legislature of Kentucky. At the same time he was nominated at Baltimore by the anti-Jackson men as a candidate for the Presidency, but in the election he was defeated by an overwhelming majority. He continued in the Senate until 1842. It was my privilege to hear his farewell speech to the Senate, and the effort he made on that occasion was worthy of his fame and honorable to his heart. During this period Mr. Clay carried the celebrated tariff compromise bill, which settled the nullification question of 1833. He also brought forward his famous land bill, to distribute the proceeds of sales among the States, which passed both Houses, but which President Jackson refused to sanction. General Jackson also vetoed the bill for the re-charter of the bank of the United States.

The nomination of General Harrison for the Presidency was a great disappointment to Mr. Clay and his friends. In 1842 he retired to Ashland. In 1844 he was unanimously nominated by the Whigs as a candidate for the Presidency, and defeated by the Democratic candidate, Mr. Polk. In 1848 he at first declined to run again for the office, but was persuaded by some of his perhaps less judicious friends to allow his name to be used in the convention. This subjected him to the humiliation of a rejection by the convention in favor of General Taylor. Elected by the Legislature of Kentucky as Senator of the United States, he took his seat in that body in 1849, and was greatly instrumental in securing the passage of those measures known as the Compromise, which gave peace to an excited, alienated and distracted country.

Such is a very brief and meagre sketch of the public life of Mr. Clay. Let me as rapidly portray his character as a *man*, an orator and a statesman, before I consider him in the light of a Christian, in his closing years and his dying hours.

The elements of Mr. Clay's nature were very noble and "kindly mixed." He came upon the stage of action with a marked and defined character, which he maintained until his death. Such as he was in the office of Mr. Tinsley, such he continued to the end. Probably no man of his time who passed through so many scenes of excitement and temptation, which were calculated to revolutionize the character, remained, in his subjective being, so nearly the same at 70 years of age as he was at 17. Most of us

on looking back to a period of boyhood or early manhood, are wont to say, in view of the difference in character and sentiment between that period and the present, that we can scarcely believe in our own identity. I think Mr. Clay could have had little if anything of this feeling. He was singularly the same in character throughout his entire career. His character developed, but did not change. It towered higher and spread wider, but the same sound heart of oak was the centre of its being, and the same green leaves waved in the sunlight, and the same sweet music was heard among its branches. His intellectual judgments, his opinions and his public policy were also, from the beginning to the close of his career, almost identically the same. He struck the same notes at the end as at the beginning of the lofty lyric of his life. Yet inasmuch as his opinions and his policy were founded on broad principles of moral and constitutional justice and wisdom, they never left him loitering behind his time, but enabled him to keep abreast of all true and steady progress, and to adjust his measures to the new exigencies of a rapidly expanding age and country. No man could say when the reins were in his hands that the steeds which bore on the car of State, proceeded with a languid or lag-gard pace. Neither could any man say that they were allowed, or would be allowed, to *run away*. It is believed that only on one important point of policy did he ever change his mind. In that instance with characteristic manliness he promptly avowed the change. In this respect he differed from his great Southern rival Mr. Calhoun,

who by a species of political metaphysics was in the habit of contending that in all his changes, he changed only in appearance, only in conformity to the change of circumstances; that the real change was in the state of the question; that if he went backward it was only in order to get a better start to go forward; and that if he went aside, it was but the tacking of the ship, which was made necessary by adverse winds, and that it was in fact part of an onward progress in the right direction. The essential sameness of Mr. Clay in earlier and later life, made it seem strange to persons who never saw him until he became advanced in life, to find him old and feeble in body. It struck them as unexpected and incongruous. I have often noticed the sensation of surprise and melancholy which the appearance of Mr. Clay created in the minds of those who saw him for the first time within the last two or three years. He had been so long known as *Harry* Clay, and *Harry* of the West; his name was so much the synonym of vigor, daring, and splendor; his productions continued to exhibit so much of the same characteristics of vivacity and genius, that it was difficult to conceive of him as otherwise than in the prime and power of life. Even so late as the last Congress in which he sat, and in which the compromise was effected, there was that in his tone and manner and style of thought which suggested an idea of incongruity between a body so aged and worn and a mind so fresh, vigorous, prolific, and persistent as that which he constantly displayed.

Mr. Clay was undoubtedly a man of warm affections



and quick sympathies and sensibilities. He had also a generous and magnanimous disposition. These qualities of heart, shining through manners which derived from them a matchless charm, made the admiration which was felt for him full of devoted and enthusiastic affection. To these attractive traits there was added a bravery of spirit that was truly grand. No man ever impressed me with such a conviction of his moral courage as Mr. Clay. To this there was added a will every whit as rigid, though not so rough, as that of his great antagonist General Jackson. Nor can there be denied to Mr. Clay, even by those who scrutinize his life most closely, an honest adherence to his convictions of truth and duty. He adhered to his favorite measures of policy and defended them with new zeal when it was evident they did not gain the suffrage of the masses. He would doubtless have well liked to have been President of the United States; he never denied it; but I do not at all doubt the sincerity of his declaration that he had rather be right than to be President. He would not have sanctioned any measure of public policy which he did not believe to be wise and just and of public benefit, for any office in the gift of man. That he was ambitious he would not have denied. That having enjoyed the stimulus of affectionate admiration for years he would have felt its absence, his most ardent friends would be ready to concede. But that his ambition was ever other than a desire of fame, honor and affection for meritorious services, or that he entertained fixed and malignant resentments or was unwilling to

acknowledge and atone for hasty injustice, cannot be admitted. The secret of his lofty tone, his daring defiance of his enemies, and his intrepid attitude, was the strong self-consciousness that he was honest in his intentions, honorable in his feelings, and true to his convictions. Now that party passion has died away this is almost universally admitted.

Such was the *morale* of his character. To his honesty and fearlessness of character all classes of politicians immediately after his death gave their emphatic testimony. "I believe," said Mr. Cass, "he was as pure a patriot as ever participated in the councils of a nation." "He led where duty indicated," said Mr. Seward, "reckless whether he encountered one President or twenty Presidents, whether he was opposed by factions or even by the whole people. His opinion was always known; his course was always open. He was the most reliable of Statesmen." Such was Mr. Clay, THE MAN.

As a thinker and orator, a complete and beautiful portraiture of Mr. Clay could be made by the combination of the addresses of Messrs. Hunter, Seward, and Breckenridge, made on the occasion of his death, in the halls of Congress. I have read again and again, with increasing admiration, those masterly specimens of Parliamentary eloquence, in which the pathos of the elegy, the raptures of the lyric ode, the grave and weighty wisdom of the Senate, and the solemn earnestness of the pulpit, are beautifully and on such an occasion appropriately combined; and I do not believe that the record of ancient or modern oratory contains anything superior in their kind. Their



theme was their inspiration; and they *became* the great sublime they drew. As a thinker, Mr. Clay was eminently practical. He employed what in the language of modern metaphysics is called the practical understanding, far more than what by the same system is designated as the speculative reason. He had no taste for metaphysics; and scarcely more for poetry. Neither as a statesman did he, like Burke and Guizot and Webster, enter deeply into the philosophy of Government and History, as deduced from a profound analysis of the nature and capabilities of man, and a perception of the subtler and remoter causes in the philosophy and spirit of the age, which shape existing, or determine the character of coming, institutions, and as connected with just views of the purposes of God in the government of the world. But within his chosen range of practical, patriotic, wise, wide-seeing, far-seeing statesmanship he was a most sagacious, accurate and successful thinker. He *thought* with a view to *act* wisely, justly, and for the good of his country. In the power of imagination he was gifted, though not to a preëminent degree. Its creations were always his servants, never his masters. He took them with him when he mounted the chariot of triumph and of power, but it was as outriders and footmen to augment his state, and not as postillions or drivers to guide his way. In rhetoric he reached frequent excellences of the highest order, catching graces beyond the reach of Art, carelessly and impromptu throwing off phrases and condensed metaphors which would have done no discredit to Homer and to Scott in their lyric raptures, and often

in the same orations giving examples of glaring carelessness and inelegance. But as an orator he was unequaled. In some single characteristics he had his peers and superiors; but in the rare combination which makes the great orator, the speaking man, the man to be heard, it is believed that he never had his equal in this country. In the intense convergence of all thought to a single point, in the steady, rapid, undiverted march of his mind to the case in hand, Mr. Calhoun had no equal. In the calm, solid, precious, polished thought, in which logic always *was* though it frequently did not *appear*; which was sparingly adorned, but always with such rare gems as to be fit for the diadems of Poet kings; which was seldom warmed by emotion, but sometimes became, without losing its priceless value as truth and thought and philosophy for future ages, magnificent and awful with the intensity and the volume of passion which it conveyed; in these great qualities Mr. Webster never had a peer in his own time, and may never have a superior in the future. In that exuberant wealth of interblending imagination, fancy, passion and keenest intellect—in that singular combination of the shrewdest New England sagacity and sense with an imagination which seems in turn serenely classic, luxuriously Oriental and severely Saxon—in that affluent eloquence which like the river St. Lawrence, the combined outlet of vast inland seas, is fed by mighty gatherings of various learning, and which seems to be crowded even in its deep wide bed, and always to dimple into little whirls of beauty from over fullness, and ever and anon to foam and roar and spar-

kle into rapids, and which at last pours itself forth in a great Niagara, glorious with its booming thunder, its silvery and golden mists, its feathery foam and its radiant sunbows—in this all combining, but sometimes grotesque and disordered eloquence, Mr. Choate stood and stands alone. But in the presence of them all Mr. Clay was manifestly the orator of his age and country. We say not the Writer, the Thinker, the Rhetorician, the Logician, the Expounder, but **THE ORATOR**. In voice, gesture, expression, self-possession, clear and rapid thinking, sagacious perception of the state of the question in the minds of those whom he addressed; in the detection of the fallacies of an opponent, apt phraseology, quick and bright retort, humor, heart, passion, energy, intrepidity; in making imagination minister to reason; in carrying by successive assaults first the intellect and then the heart and then the will; in throwing the glory of patriotism over his argument and his cause—in all those qualities which constitute the Orator, he must be admitted to have surpassed all his great rivals and cotemporaries.

“ Oh 'twas a sight to see him in his hour  
Of kindled interest and of conscious power,  
When, burnt and burnished in his fervent zeal,  
His spirit glittered—a Damascus steel!  
Out-gleamed his quick and ever moving eyes,  
Keen to detect and skillful to disguise;  
With honest logic, brilliant wit, vast sense,  
And sudden, vivid, rousing, daring eloquence;  
With look, voice, gesture, plastic to the life,  
With which his words and sentiments were rife,  
He looked as leading, in that triumph hour,  
A bannered army terrible with power;  
Now a Napoleon planning conquests large,  
And now a Murat in his dashing charge.  
Prince of the Senate crowned, with kingly grace,  
Living and dying he maintained the place.”

Such was Henry Clay, THE ORATOR.

As a leader in Congress and a practical Statesman he was equally preëminent. In the ability to reconcile conflicting interests, and harmonize angry factions, and overcome his own personal feelings and predilections, for the sake of the public good, by measures which should combine wisdom, forbearance, justice and benevolence to all, without the sacrifice of honor on the part of any portion or the whole of the country, he has repeatedly shown himself superior to all the Statesmen of his time. So far as human eye can see, no man but Mr. Clay, or at least not all other men without Mr. Clay, could have effected the Missouri compromise of 1821, the tariff of 1833, or the recent compromise measures. Many men may show great power in wielding the passions of a section or a party. Few men are great enough at the same time to encounter the passions of all parties and overcome their own, and bring conflicting interests and roused feelings into harmony and agreement.

Such was Henry Clay the STATESMAN.

I now proceed to notice his character as a Christian, and to describe some of the incidents of his closing hours. In doing so I would speak of him in the aspect in which he appeared to me in his latter days. It is no part of my purpose to make the latter religious portion of his life to cover or disguise the faults of his earlier career. *All* the history of a great man should be known. It is for this reason that I do not hesitate not only to state the general fact of his religiousness; but to analyze its

character; in order that we may not only see that he was a Christian, but that we may learn what kind of a Christian he was. History and biography are profitable only as they are true; and delineations of character are valuable only as they are discriminating and just. All that I have to say upon this subject proceeds upon my conviction that there was a marked difference between his religious sentiments and feelings during his last illness, and those which he had entertained previous to that time. That I may arrange my remarks with some degree of order I will speak of his views and feelings previous to his baptism—after his baptism until his last illness—and from his last illness until his death.

Mr. Clay was never skeptical. He always believed in the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Yet it is well known that for a large portion of his life, he did not profess to be under the sway of religious principle and feeling. He exhibited a style of character much more frequently to be met with, I think, at the South than at the North—that of a man who does not shelter his inattention or disregard to religion under the plea of doubt or unbelief. He frankly avowed that he believed the Christian system, but did not realize it in his own experience and life. “I am not a professor of religion—I wish I were—I trust I shall be.” This was his manly and ingenuous confession. Even when he yielded to the wicked and silly practice of duelling, he did not vindicate nor extenuate the guilt and folly of the proceeding. “I owe it to the community to say,” he remarked in a public



address, "that whatever heretofore I may have done, or by inevitable circumstances may be forced to do, no man in it holds in deeper abhorrence than I do, the pernicious habit of duelling, condemned as it must be by the judgment and philosophy, to say nothing of the religion, of every thinking man: it is an affair of feeling about which we cannot though we should reason."

The following extracts of a letter from the Rt. Rev. Bishop Smith of Kentucky, received soon after Mr. Clay's death, illustrate the truth of the remark that he always believed in Christianity and always hoped to become a subject of its saving power :

"I reached Lexington," writes the Bishop, "in the fall of 1830, just after the opening of the celebrated medical school, once so flourishing there, and learned that one of its most distinguished Professors, in his Introductory Lecture, had gone just as far as he dared, and farther than prudence would justify, in insinuations and side-thrusts unfavorable to Christianity; and that upon retiring from hearing the Lecture, Mr. Clay remarked that he should like nothing better than the opportunity of meeting that champion, boastful as he was, on a proper arena, and demolishing his sophisms."

About sixteen or seventeen years ago while I was yet Rector of Christ's Church, Lexington, of which his lady and his only surviving daughter Mrs. Ann Erwin were members, I was suddenly called up in the dead hour of night to witness the most thrilling and awful scene which has marked my eventful ministry — the death of Mrs. Erwin, without a

moment's warning. She was dead when I and the Doctor (who had been sent for at the same moment) arrived ; and the shrieks of the children and of warmly attached domestics were enough to move a heart of stone. Mr. Clay was in Washington. The duty of announcing the sad event fell upon me ; and I shall never forget the feeling and solemn manner in which he replied. Greatly did he rejoice that his only daughter had died a Christian, and earnestly he expressed the wish that he might become one.

During scenes of domestic trial and affliction and friendly familiar intercourse, I had frequent opportunities of pressing upon him the duty of personal religion. I was always listened to with respect, and sometimes with real emotion ; and never without a cordial admission of the claims and importance of religion. At such times, however, I made up my mind that the probabilities were greatly against his taking a decided stand upon the subject, until his Presidential aspirations should be realized or defeated. And yet his convictions matured so rapidly that he did take his stand in the midst of his political career.

The following passages from a letter of the Rev. Mr. Berkley, the Pastor of Mr. Clay at Lexington, received about the same time, contain statements of great interest :

“ I have been acquainted with Mr. Clay and his family,” he writes, “ for about seventeen years ; and for the last fourteen years have been Rector of the church in which they worshiped. I have known them as a Pastor usually knows his people.



“In his word and action Mr. Clay expressed a very high respect for the institutions of religion, and great confidence in its divine authenticity. He usually attended church once a day on the Sabbath, when he was at home, but not so regularly before as after he joined the church. He evidently came to think more seriously and to feel more deeply on the subject of religion, two or three years before he avowed his purpose to embrace it.

“At the time of his baptism our present church edifice was in the course of construction, and we worshiped in the best place we could find. Under these circumstances he preferred to be baptized at home, and as one place was then as sacred to us as another, I did not hesitate to assent to it. The Baptists all over the country insist that Mr. Clay was immersed. It would have suited me as well if he had been, but he was not, and expressed no solicitude whatever as to the mode in which he should receive that ordinance. He was baptized in the parlor at Ashland on the 22d of June, 1847. He took his first communion in the chapel of Morrison College, where we then worshiped, on Sunday, the 4th of July following, and received confirmation in the same place on the 18th of the same month. The vessel which contained the water from which he was baptized, was a very large cut glass vase presented to him by a manufacturer of such ware in the city of Pittsburgh.

“When I was about to begin the service, his family and several friends being present, I saw that he had not a Prayer Book, and suggested that he might be aided in

answering the questions in the service by using one. He replied, 'I think I shall be able to answer them,' and he did answer them with great emphasis and with deep emotion.

"He felt a lively interest in the prosperity of the church, and concerned himself much in the erection of the present church edifice. He attended the meetings of the congregation which were called with a view of giving point and efficiency to our plans, and aided by his counsels and his means in bringing the work to a successful completion.

"I never knew a person to be more deeply interested in arriving at the truth of religion than Mr. Clay. In all that relates to man's salvation he wished to understand the Christian system thoroughly—the nature and evidences of regeneration—justification by faith alone in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. After his mind had been drawn to an investigation of the claims of religion upon himself, I scarcely ever met him at his office or at his house that conversation did not turn upon this subject, in the course of which he would ask many questions in reference to the doctrines and teachings of scripture.

"On one occasion about three years ago he became very ill. Being absent from the city, I did not see him until he had gotten better. When I entered his room he rose and taking my hand in both of his, he said with tears in his eyes, 'My dear sir, I am glad to see you. I have been ill. I have been very near the grave, and I was surprised at the composure and even pleasure with which I was permitted to look into it; and my feelings kindled

almost into rapture when I thought of that better world beyond.'

"Of his deep earnestness in a preparation for that better world from his first assumption of the vows of religion I have always been well assured."

These testimonies from Mr. Berkley, who had the best opportunity of knowing Mr. Clay's character and feelings, are in the highest degree satisfactory. That he was penitent, believing, earnest and faithful to his own convictions of the duty which his new character as a disciple of Christ imposed upon him, none who knew him could for a moment doubt.

When I became acquainted with his religious views I thought that his opinions upon some important practical duties were immature and imperfect. I refer to his views of the nature of the Christian Sabbath and of a Christian's lawful conformity to the world. I have a vivid recollection of a singular conversation which I once had with him on this subject. Walking in the grounds of the Capitol on one of those evenings when the Marine Band assembles a throng of citizens, strangers and children to enjoy the music, the scene, and the society, I encountered Mr. Clay. He accosted me with his rich mellow voice — "Ah, Doctor! so you are here in this *gay* scene?" laying an arch emphasis on the word *gay*. "Yes," I replied, "in this *gay* and *innocent* scene, Mr. Clay." "Well now," he replied, "I will be obliged to you if you can make me see any real difference in point of innocence, between this scene and theatres and balls, which I have of late been much cen-

sured for attending.” He then told me that he had just received some anonymous letters expressive of censure and regret for his having lately attended a great ball at Philadelphia. He seemed to be much annoyed by these communications. I told him I was glad that his attention had been called to the subject, though I did not approve of the manner in which it had been done — that I thought his example in this respect had done great harm to the cause of religion — that I knew it had grieved many pious persons in our own congregation, and that I hoped he would see reason to take a different view of the subject from that he then appeared to do. I then asked him if he were serious in the request that I would show the difference between such a scene as that which we were then enjoying and a theatre or ball-room. Assuring me that he was, I then stated such points of difference as suggested themselves to my mind. He was not satisfied. I then asked him what was meant and what he himself meant, or had in his mind and purpose, in the vows of Baptism? What did the Scriptures mean which denounced conformity to the world? He replied with a clearness and fullness which showed that his mind had been at work upon the subject. The substance of his answer was this: They implied an absolute renunciation of all things that were in themselves, morally evil; and the absence of such love and devotion to any thing in life, whether business or pleasure, which would interfere with true and supreme love and loyalty of the heart to God. We discussed the subject at some length. In the course of his remarks he

contended that equally good and holy men held different views upon the subject, and reminded me that many respectable persons of my own profession in England were in the habit of attending balls, theatres and even horse-races. I acknowledged that a few and but a few English clergymen might still be found who indulged themselves in these amusements; but that they were a by-word and a reproach for this very reason, "horse-racing and theatre-going parsons" being the term by which it was usual to designate those who *thus* disgraced their profession. I then playfully remarked that if he belonged to that Diocese he might have the Canon of the church which prohibits attendance upon the theatre *fired off* against him. He replied that he had been too much accustomed to be fired at to be much alarmed at ecclesiastical guns. When we parted, it was with an admonition on his part not to draw the reins too tight, which I returned by begging him not to leave them too loose. The interview was very animated and interesting. I do not know that he ever changed his views upon this subject; but I cannot believe that if he had gone out into the world after what he learned in his sick chamber, he would ever again have been found in such scenes.

It is well known that Mr. Clay attended the Senate but once during the last session, and then uttered only a few sentences on some unimportant point. I remember to have felt at the time that I had probably heard his last word in that scene of his triumph and glory. So it proved. He was very feeble; and he told me that that slight exertion had so



shaken his nerves that for an hour after he could not sign his name.

On my first visit to his chamber he told me that his friend Doctor Jackson wished him to remove to Philadelphia, but unless he could see reason to entertain a more favorable opinion of his own case than he then did, he should feel that it was useless for him to change his residence. He said that he was not unwilling nor afraid to die; that he trusted in the merits of his Redeemer for acceptance; that if his present sickness were to be fatal he should wish it might be God's will that it should not be protracted, but that he hoped to be resigned to what God might order. He desired me occasionally to visit him and hold religious services in his room, as he could scarcely hope again to attend the public services of the church. I accordingly made an appointment with him for that purpose. I do not know that I can give a better idea of my first visits and impressions than by copying the record of some of my earlier interviews with him which I made at the time. I give them because it is a matter of historical interest to know what *were* the religious opinions and feelings of Mr. Clay, as it will be the subject of great gratification to Christians to know how decidedly and distinctly he occupied their ground.

"At this visit," (my second) "I asked Mr. Clay distinctly whether he received the great doctrines of the gospel as set forth in our church, and rested his personal hopes of salvation on the death and mediation of Jesus Christ? He answered warmly that he did, and that those great and

saving truths commended themselves to him more and more day by day. At the same time he spoke with feeling and interest of his attempts to conceive of Heaven, of his view of the Saviour there, and of the kind accommodation to our nature, in the scheme of redemption, in its presentation to us of God in our own nature, that our thoughts and affections might be gathered around and fixed on him.

“ On Sunday evening (January 24) I held a religious service in Mr. Clay’s room. He was greatly fatigued, and I was compelled to be brief. He seemed much gratified and cheered by the interview and service. He does not look at the gospel in an intellectual or theological light, but he lays hold of it as a practical remedy with a simplicity, teachableness, and faith, which, in so great a man is truly beautiful. I was touched by his evident humility. The service which I used was the office for the visitation of the sick, and in addressing to him the faithful and searching exhortation of that service he was affected to tears. Manifestly he is growing in humility, self-knowledge, and spiritual insight. I believe his attitude before God and the Saviour is just that of a little child, who asks for guidance and receives it with a teachable and happy spirit.

“ February 3.—Called on Mr. Clay last evening and was received by him in the most cordial and affectionate manner. He was considerably spent by a fit of coughing, and was very anxious to hear of his wife’s condition, the report of her extreme illness having reached him that day, by



telegraph. Again I am struck with Mr. Clay's gentleness. He spoke of his wife's religious character with much praise and satisfaction. He said it would be melancholy if, after having lived so many years together, one or the other should die while they were separated, but that he trusted that if it should be God's will he should be sustained under it. He also observed that one of his greatest comforts was the knowledge that she would be sustained and peaceful under it, as he had always found her able to bear with patient resignation the sorrows to which she had been subjected. He then added with much emotion that they had experienced great sorrows. I said to him that it was no doubt in mercy, for that with a career of triumph and fame like his, he would have been likely to have been absorbed by this world and to have made no preparation for another. In this remark he acquiesced, but added that it was more the way in which he observed that Mrs. Clay bore those sorrows, than it was the sorrows themselves, which first turned his serious thoughts to the great difference between himself and her, and to the question of his own salvation. He said he was much struck with two things, viz: That her religion greatly deepened her affections, and yet enabled her to give up the objects of them with more peacefulness and resignation than those whose love was less. In this result he felt that there was a power higher than nature could impart—*a divine power.*"

After this I was in the habit of visiting and holding a religious service with Mr. Clay frequently—at one period

as often as every day. On these occasions I usually read a portion of Scripture, making brief and practical comments, and selecting it with a view to bring out the main doctrines and duties of the Gospel; and closed with prayer appropriate to his then condition of mind and health. In these interviews I had an opportunity to hear him converse and express his opinions on many interesting topics of current and permanent interest.

There was a touching and indescribable interest and charm about Mr. Clay in his sick chamber. I was frequently led to admire the manliness with which he avowed his Christian hopes to many of his friends who were not able to respond to them. His affectionate manner and his grateful appreciation of kindness were very beautiful. I shall never have out of my ear and heart the gentle and mellow tones, in which when he was very much enfeebled he would say, after the religious services which he seemed greatly to enjoy, "Thank you; Thank you!" A little incident occurred in reference to myself which showed in a touching way his singular regard to the feelings of all around him. At a time when he was very feeble and not expecting to survive but a few days (though he afterwards rallied), I was in the habit of visiting him every day, in the afternoon. At that time, although he was able to be on his couch but about two hours, he was in the habit of being dressed as carefully, even to his boots and his watch, as if he were about to go to the Senate. It so happened that on one occasion when I called I found him so exhausted that he

was in haste to return to his bed, and was unable to join in the usual religious services. For several days after, I was prevented from seeing him by parish duty. Mr. Clay sent for me, and expressed the fear that I had not been to see him because he might have been irritable or impatient when I was last with him. I assured him that I had not observed the slightest evidence, as I had not, of any thing but excessive weariness, and that I had been detained by duty elsewhere. In the kindest terms he desired me not to allow him to become troublesome. So condescending, so kind, so humble, so fearful of wounding or giving trouble, how could it be otherwise than that the favored group who were permitted to minister at his bedside learned to love him with a singular tenderness and tenacity of affection?

The last communion of Mr. Clay was a scene of great interest, which I have elsewhere described. "After the service was concluded," here again I quote from my Diary, "I sat by his side and he took and pressed my hands as he was accustomed to do. I then asked him if there was anything which as a dying man he would wish to confide to me as a minister of God, or any commission which he would prefer to have me, rather than another, discharge, or any restitution which he felt ought to be made before he died. He replied, thanking me, that he believed there was none; that his temporal affairs were settled, and that he had nothing to weigh upon or disturb his mind. I expressed my satisfaction that he had been able thus to set his house in order. He said that he had done so some time since,

and could have wished, if it had been God's will, that he might have passed off without the painful and protracted suffering to which he had been exposed. I endeavored to show him how needful it might be, in the case of one whose life had been like his, to undergo such lingering suffering that he might be disciplined into patient acquiescence, and be made to know what spirit he was of. Then begging me to see him occasionally while he should remain, he sank exhausted upon his couch, and I left him.

“During all this service Mr. Clay's manner was very peaceful and humble. He has no fear of death. His mind is perfectly clear and strong. He still expresses himself in his usual felicitous phraseology and is still beautifully courteous and kind in manner, and even yet maintains that majestic bearing for which he has always been distinguished.”

I may add without impropriety that the scene here alluded to has been made the subject of a painting by Mr. Weir, the artist, whose embarkation of the Pilgrims fills a panel in the rotunda of the capitol at Washington, and that it is now in the hands of a celebrated engraver in London, by whom it is to be copied in large copperplate engraving, in the highest style of art. I had the gratification of seeing this production at West Point during the last summer. The scene is very true to the facts. The group—Mr. Clay on his couch, his colored servant kneeling near him, and the officiating clergyman,

all occupy the positions in the picture that they did in fact. The likeness of Mr. Clay is marvelously truthful.

After this scene Mr. Clay lingered much longer than it was supposed it possible that he could do. At last the death night came. I stood by his dying bed. I saw his long protracted but patiently endured distress. I heard him, in the slight wanderings of his mind, speak affectionately to his wife, and call upon his mother, as if she were present, and he were yet young. It was a most impressive and touching scene. As I have elsewhere written—

“I’ve seen sweet children, gentle women go,  
 God’s dear peace resting on their patient brow,  
 But never yet saw I a being die  
 With a more simple, grand humility.  
 Ne’er have I seen around a dying bed  
 So much majestic peace and beauty shed.  
 Gentle and patient, thoughtful, calm and kind,  
 With manners softened—holily refined—  
 He for whose pains a nation’s eyes were dim,  
 Seemed grieved that one should wait and watch on him.  
 Loud in his ear the booming guns proclaimed  
 The nation’s rival candidates were named;  
 The swelling praises to his mighty fame,  
 With deepening pathos to his chamber came;  
 The sounds with scarce a meaning reach his ears,  
 ’Tis sweeter music that his soul now hears:  
 While round its base the weeping millions lie,  
 He mounts the Pisgah of his fame to die.  
 Across his glories which grow dim and pale,  
 His spirit flies to childhood’s happy vale;  
 There folds its weary, broken wings in rest,  
 And murmurs softly in its early nest;  
 There does his child-heart to his mother hie;  
 There does his child-heart to his Saviour fly:  
 So sweet those feelings, human and divine,  
 His fame’s forgot—his glories cease to shine—  
 Then death. How grand! how glorious is the lot,  
 In which a fame like this is all forgot!

A single sentence conveys the moral of such a death. It is not the question of the *preacher* but of the *man* — “If the mighty need a strength like this in the hour of death, how, without it, shall the feeble fare?”





"A WISE MAN IS STRONG."



# A DISCOURSE,

ON THE

# DEATH OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

DELIVERED IN TRINITY CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.,

NOVEMBER 7, 1852.



## VII.

### D I S C O U R S E.

THE WISE MAN IS STRONG.—Prov. xxiv. 5.

A wise and strong man, lately with us, has departed. The last of “the *three mighties*” is no more. DANIEL WEBSTER is no longer the name of *living* wisdom, grandeur, power. He is hidden from our eyes. The funeral rites are over. The mourning multitude who, with drooping heads and swelling hearts, attended his burial, have dispersed. The little group of chosen friends, lately gliding with suppressed, reverential and affectionate sorrow around his bed, and through the hushed house of mourning, have all departed. The echo of the blended voices of bereaved love and affectionate eulogy, which rose above his grave, yet linger on the air. The sickness, the death, the burial, the admiring tributes paid to his memory by individuals, Cities, States, and the Nation, no longer passing in august and mournful procession before our minds, have now taken their places among the most sublime and affecting incidents of our national history. That majestic form, which we have seen so often and so recently in this house of God, has passed forever from our view. It sleeps, in the midst of a scene

of solitary grandeur, by the sea. It rests in a favorite spot, where, looking out upon the ocean and the sky, he loved to meditate and drink in the spirit of a scene so congenial to his mighty mind, in the hour of morning's freshness and of twilight's calm. It is a resting place suited to the severe and grand simplicity of his character, his intellect, his life, his death, his burial. The sea—emblem of vastness, majesty, mystery, and power—chants, in fit and melancholy monotone, his perpetual requiem. As the pilgrim to his tomb shall stand upon that elevation where he sleeps, and look out upon the sea, and hear the measured music of the waves as they break upon the shore, he will see a sublimer ocean of human souls spreading before his spirit eye, and hear it rolling and breaking, in strains of sorrow, affection, admiration, and gratitude, at the base of his lofty fame.

Few men have, so well as Mr. Webster, illustrated the truth, that "a wise man is strong."

The wise and foolish, in the language of Solomon, sometimes mean merely the good and the evil. Sometimes Solomon uses the word "wise" to designate exclusively intellectual sagacity and power. At other times, as in the text, he includes both meanings in the word. Very frequently he asserts that holiness—the wisdom of the heart—increases the sagacity, discretion, and power of the understanding—the wisdom of the mind. When these two wisdoms are combined, then, in

the highest and best sense of the word, the man is wise.

He who in this sense is wise, must be strong, and all the knowledge that he gains, must increase his strength.

If we suppose the intellect of an angel to be given to a good man, and to lose nothing of its vigor and splendor by its mortal encasement, and by its union with a human soul and a human heart, we can imagine how greatly wise he would be. How would his great intellect sit, in throned supremacy, over other minds! He would see things as they are, trace their causes, perceive their connexions, run forward to their results, disentangle sophistries, hold vast details in his simultaneous conception, pierce through seemings to realities, bring and bind together severed truths; and on every field of thought, and in every department of action, make to rise amid the rubbish of the schemes and systems of the past, and the incomplete and deformed structures of the present, beautiful, symmetrical, and *complete palaces* of thought, based upon eternal truths, and fashioned after those perfect patterns in the skies, whose "builder and maker is God!" If such a being should mingle in the affairs of men, how strong would his wisdom prove in ruling the thought, and determining the conduct, of the multitudes who would be found sitting at his feet.

At a vast distance below a being such as this would be, stand the foremost men of all the world. But the supposition of such a being enables us the better to perceive in



what the strength of the wise consists. In this world of uncertainty and error, he who can best tell the multitudes, who are perplexed and suffering from past mistakes, what is right, truth, wisdom, safety, and success, is a man of power. He is strong for good and strong against evil. God's might is with him. Every accession of knowledge will increase his own and others' strength.

A great mind, enlightened by grace, and directed in its thought and work by moral and religious principle and feeling, is a precious gift from God to man. It is a great instrument of good. Its strength is inward peace, and its goings forth are beneficence. It deserves our gratitude. It awakens our just admiration. It stimulates our curious and wandering search into its structure, its action, and the hidings of its power. It rewards our study. It gives right direction to our own minds. It guides communities and nations into the ways of truth, righteousness, and peace.

Such a man *is strong in himself*. No more pitiable spectacle of weakness can be conceived than that of a human soul in doubt concerning the future, and unprepared to enter upon it with "quietness and assurance." Even if it have the mental gifts of Bolingbroke or Hume, it is a poor and feeble thing, with no peace, no power to breast present ills, and no good assurance of happiness in the future. Such a soul cannot be self-poised, calm, and strong. Its doubts are weakness; its conclusions are not strength. All uncertain of God, of the soul's immortality, of the Almighty's mode of dealing in another world

—if such there be—with spirits that have sinned, how can there be confidence and rest of heart, strength of moral purpose, fixed plans and ends in life, and a steady, cheerful, and brave doing and enduring unto the end? Or if the conclusion be reached, that beyond the present life all is blank, that the soul at death flits into non-existence, what is to come out of that black nothingness to cheer and assure the soul? Or if it conclude that God will make all his creatures happy in another world, how often will that conclusion be shaken, when reason tells him that it is not *proved*, and fear suggests that it *may not be true*, and conscience whispers that it *is false*! If he doubts, he is driven, without rudder, compass, chart, or star, over life's vexed waste of waves, he knows not whither. If he believes, then, indeed, he is anchored; but he is anchored in a dark, misty, and stormy night, by a shore from which no beacon beams, and no friendly voice of warning or direction comes; and,—all uncertain whether the vague and solemn sounds which reach him are the roar of the breakers on the rocks where he must perish, or the fall of the waves on the shore of the safe harbor into which he may pass in peace—he must await, in gloom and darkness, the breaking of the day. Surely this man has no inward strength!

But when a great mind is wise to seek and find out God, and secure pardon and peace in Christ, it is girded about with power. Then it is in communication with God, and draws strength from him. Uncertainty about the future is dispelled. The path of duty is made clear. The way

to God's favor is disclosed. The mysteries connected with his own personal condition are resolved. He knows, by faith which rests on proof and promise, that all things work together for his good. His plans, his ends, his motives, are all high and inspiring. In his weakness, he knows how to obtain strength. In his darkness, he knows where to resort for light. Though there be mysteries connected with the existence of evil and the providence of God, which he cannot comprehend, he holds in his hands the sealed solutions of these enigmas, which will be opened in heaven, and on which God has written the promise, "thou shalt know hereafter." Surely this man is strong.

A man thus endowed with great gifts of intellect, and thus at peace within, how wise he will be in the conduct of affairs, and how strong in his influence over men! He will go into life pledged and qualified to seek truth and discharge duty. He will love to promote the elevation and the happiness of man. Passion will not be allowed to pervert his judgment. Selfishness will not sway him into courses which shall promote his interests at the expense of the welfare or the happiness of others. How will men gather about, applaud, love, *give* themselves to one thus great and wise and good. There is nothing on which men expend so much of the affection, enthusiasm, and rapture of their nature, as upon their guides and leaders, whose gifted and powerful minds they believe to be under the sway of high, beneficent, and noble hearts. He who can give vivid expression to their thoughts and

feelings, clear up their difficulties, remove their doubts, carry them forward to new truths, speak the word that will save them in the hour of crisis, and give his highest energies to their welfare at the sacrifice of himself, wields a power such as Cæsars, with Senates at their heels, and legions at their beck, and nations on their knees before them, never can possess. It is a power, not over men's fears and stupid homage, but power *in* the soul, over its convictions, its affections, its moral judgments. It is power which dignifies alike him who exercises it and those who own its sway. It extorts an homage which elevates those from whom it comes; for they are then most truly free, when they bow lowliest before the might and majesty of beneficent greatness. It is the tribute of enlightened intellects, instructed consciences, and grateful hearts, to him who has taught and blessed them; and this tribute is evidence that, in the best sense, they have been made free; and, at the same time, one of the loftiest exhibitions of their freedom. Power over pure hearts and free minds, power to awaken the best latent or slumbering elements of man's nature, is real power. Great men, who are rich in intellect, genius, and practical wisdom, and at the same time good men, are the mightiest kings and heroes of the world. Vulgar kings lord it over man's baseness. These kings sway that in him which is freest, greatest, noblest! Such kings were WASHINGTON and WEBSTER!

That Mr. Webster was, in a remarkable degree, great, wise, and strong, was universally felt and owned. All men of all sections, parties, and opinions, have long called

him preëminently great. The services which he has rendered his country have made every American citizen his debtor. It is fit that everywhere through the land his name should be honored, his great mind studied, his character contemplated, and his services recalled. In this city, which was the scene of most of his public labors, and in this church where he worshiped, it is peculiarly becoming that a tribute to his memory should be paid. As one of the great works of God, we would study him. As one of God's best gifts to our country, we would render thanks to Heaven for him. As one whose wisdom has instructed us, and whose patriotism has rendered us inestimable services, we would pay to his memory warm tributes of gratitude, admiration, and respect. As one whom we have seen to go in and out among us—our fellow citizen and neighbor—with whom some of us have been permitted to hold official or friendly and social relations, and others to hold relations more intimate and sacred, we bend over his tomb with the swelling sorrow of a personal bereavement, to which the feeling that the most wondrous mind, and one of the most beautiful hearts that we have ever known, or ever expect to know, has passed away, lends a regret that might be rebellion, and grief that might be anguish, did we not believe that his spirit is at peace, and that the interrupted fellowships of the good on earth shall be resumed in heaven. It is the conviction that death does but unfold good and great men into higher being and blessedness, and that all that was best and purest in their



natures still survives to bless the world, that makes us realize that what is to us the setting of the soul, is to another hemisphere of being its refulgent rising; and it is this which soothes our sorrow as they disappear, and transmutes it into

“A holy concord, and a bright regret,  
A glorious sympathy with suns that set.”

The career of Mr. Webster, for the last thirty-five years, has been passed under the nation's eye. The circumstances of his childhood, youth, and early professional life, as well as the prominent incidents of his great public career, have, since his death, been vividly recalled and presented to our memories and hearts by the public press. It would therefore be superfluous for me to present a *sketch*, and it would be impossible for me to give a history, of his life.

I am aware that the attempt to analyze and describe the mental greatness of one who towered so high above his fellows as Mr. Webster, may wear the aspect of presumption. But the truth is, there was nothing unintelligible, nothing mysterious or obscure, in his greatness. It was understood and felt alike by minds of very different degrees of culture and of power. It was a kind of greatness which, like that of the dome of St. Peter's, or of the Pyramids, was simple and obvious, while it was transcendent. It was not like that of a Plato or a Kant, which only minds of peculiar gifts and training can discern. Men of common powers of intellect and fancy, and of the ordinary sentiments and feelings of our nature,



saw in him a man of the *same kind* with themselves—nay, they saw in him *themselves* enlarged, strengthened, ennobled, glorified!

Mr. Webster was furnished with all those faculties which, in various developments and combinations, make men great. In him there was wanting no faculty which is counted an ornament or a power in the human soul. The distinguishing peculiarity of his greatness was, that not only was each faculty separately excellent, but that all were rightly proportioned, harmoniously developed, and beautifully and mutually helpful to each other. No one faculty jostled or crowded out, or covered over, another. In that fine confederated union, no one power rebelled against, or encroached upon, or marred another; but all ministered to each other's glory and success. His power of analysis was not separated from the ability to generalize. His vivid perception of single truths did not diminish his power of viewing them in their connections. His strong, stern logic did not trample upon and crush his fancy. On the contrary, his faculties, being cultivated in due proportion, lent to each other the check or the charm they needed. His clear perception of particular truths and facts prevented rash and hasty generalization; while his fund of general principles, carefully and slowly, but surely, formed, enabled him to know whence to trace and where to place individual facts and phenomena as they appeared. His severe taste chastened his vivid imagination. His chastened imagination hung as an ornament of grace around

his neck of sinewy strength. There was often a sound of music and a wave of blazoned banners in the air as his arguments moved on ; but these were only the incidental accompaniments of his march ; and beneath them there might ever be seen the steady movement, and heard the solid tramp, of compact and embattled power. It was this rare combination of strength and beauty, grace and power, penetration and comprehensiveness, which rendered him preëminent in such various fields of thought and action. It is this which makes so many, who themselves excel in the departments in which they assign to him preëminence, declare, that he was the first lawyer, the first orator, the first statesman, the first writer of his age.

We can but briefly speak of some of the peculiarities which made the people of this country, for years, bend forward to catch every word that issued from his lips.

He had a most extraordinary clearness of statement. His mere statement of a case has often been called a stronger argument for it, than the labored plea of most other men would be.

This arose from the fact that he would allow no vagueness in his own conceptions. What he did know, he would know clearly, or he would not consider it as truly known.

And not only had he clear conceptions in his own mind, but he would give them forth in clear expressions. He gave no utterance to half-formed thoughts, and no half-utterance to thoughts full-formed. The full thought, fully

and clearly expressed — this was his rigid demand upon himself. And where shall we find sentences and thoughts in his writings which we do not comprehend? We can not avoid understanding his statements. They stand out bold, distinct, and strong. Not of his thoughts and reasonings could it be said, as of the lion just coming from the creative power —

“ Now half appeared  
The tawny lion, pawing to get free  
His hinder parts.”

His thoughts were lions completely fashioned and completely free.

In view of this habit of mind, it often occurred to me to wish, when I have heard him discuss psychological questions, and to speak of modern philosophies, that he could have directed more attention to these subjects, and given us his thoughts upon them. I know not that his was a mind that would have been likely to have added to this branch of knowledge; but he would, I think, have marked out the limits within which inquiry was legitimate and knowledge possible, with a nice discrimination and a steady hand. We should have been very sure that he meant something, and knew what he meant; and we should have had the great satisfaction of knowing precisely what his meaning was.

Connected with this peculiarity of clearness of conception was a singular power of condensation. Some men, such as Chalmers, make themselves understood by means of diffuseness, repetitions, definitions, cautions, limitations,

and contrasts. Mr. Webster studied, with unexampled success, to give clearness to single thoughts and trains of thoughts, by brief, vivid, and compact expression.

But his great power was shown in his simple, plain, and honest logic, which all men could follow, and from which no sophistry could escape. To minds of lesser powers, which had been bewildered by the complexities of another's argument, it was a matter of intense delight to follow him, as he marched right on, armed with proof, through irrelevancies and sophistries on the right hand and on the left, and took his stand on the citadel of demonstration, and planted upon it the flag of victory.

And in confirmation of the same remark I can not but repeat the recent saying of one of his distinguished brethren at the bar in Boston, to the effect that, as no man could argue a good cause so well, so few persons argued a bad cause worse. It was the difference between Sampson, his locks all flowing, with the gates of Gaza upon his back, and Sampson shorn, grinding for the Philistines.

No man ever treated the minds of those whom he addressed with more real and heart-felt respect than Mr. Webster. He never approached them as those who could be led by passion or deceived by sophistry. He made no appeals to their baser nature, and took no advantage of their ignorance. He addressed them in good faith as his equals in intelligence and patriotism. He took upon himself none of the airs of a political pedagogue. He constructed the same kind of arguments, and in the same forms and phrases, for the highest and the humblest minds.

His power over them was the power of truth, of fact, of reason, of right, of justice, and of conscience, whose vehicle and interpreter he aimed to be. He played no tricks before his audience or his country. He used with them no sleight of hand. He never juggled them into blind and ignorant belief. He was not one of those veiled prophets, whose glory is seen only on the edges of the covering, behind which they stand hidden from the gaze of their deluded worshipers. He was open as the day.

Very remarkable, also, was Mr. Webster's power of seeing the precise points upon which an argument turned, the decisive issue that controlled a question. Often, when a great body of argument stood and blustered before him, he has known how to demolish it by a blow at its central fallacy. A single stroke upon its brain has laid it lifeless at his feet.

To these characteristics may be added the high philosophy, the pure sentiment, the religious elevation, the impassioned earnestness, the vivid and daring imagination, which signalized his higher efforts, when in some great crisis in the State, or in some moment of intense personal excitement, the whole enthusiasm, passion, and patriotism of his nature kindled, blazed, and glowed, investing himself in radiance, and shooting convincing light and splendor over a grateful and admiring country. They who have seen this, will never see its like again!

There have been several occasions in Mr. Webster's history when he has been thus roused, and in which he has shown himself preëminently "strong." The Consti-

tution and the Union of the States were the objects of his intense admiration and affection. Their glory and importance were the most kindling themes which could be presented to his mind. If they were in peril, his whole nature was aroused. On two occasions—that of his reply to Mr. Hayne, and that of his speech in March, 1850—he has spoken on these topics with amazing eloquence and power.

We cannot, even now, read in our closets the words which he uttered on the first of these occasions, without feeling the eye suffuse, the heart throb, and the pulses leap. What power they had at the crisis, in the scene where they were spoken, issuing warm and vivid from the kindled soul of the Orator, with tones and looks and gestures of corresponding grandeur, many remember, all have heard, none who read the history of their country will be ignorant of or forget. The rapture of admiration and gratitude which this speech awakened, the power with which it settled forever some momentous principles and questions, never have been surpassed. No one doubts that it is the greatest oration ever delivered in this country. Many believe that it is the greatest which ever fell from the lips of man. Never has the description of the poet received a finer illustration. We feel that he who wrote it must have been in the Senate on that occasion, and written in commemoration of the scene :

“Come, and I will tell thee of a joy, which the parasites of pleasure have not known,  
Though earth, air, and sea have gorged the appetites of sense.  
Behold what fire is in his eye, what fervor in his cheek ;  
That glorious burst of winged words—how bound they from his tongue ;



The full expression of the mighty thought, the strong triumphant argument ;  
The rush of native eloquence, resistless as Niagara ;  
The keen demand, the clear reply, the fine poetic image,  
The nice analogy, the clinching fact, the metaphor bold and free,  
The grasp of concentrated intellect, wielding the omnipotence of truth,  
The grandeur of his speech in his majesty of mind !  
Champion of the right, patriot or priest, or pleader of the innocent cause ;  
Upon whose lips the mystic bee hath dropped the honey of persuasion ;  
Whose heart and tongue have been touched as of old by a live coal from the altar,  
How wide the spreading of thy peace ! how deep the draught of thy pleasure !”

But for power—power of character, intellect, and a long life of patriotic service ; power resulting from confidence in his great abilities and true patriotism, his equal justice and his large wisdom—nothing has ever equaled that which he exerted when, in an alarming crisis, he stood up to speak on the 7th of March, 1850, and the whole country bent forward with palpitating eagerness to hear. Well may the minister of the Gospel commemorate that scene, for on the preservation of the Union the best interests of religion, no less than of liberty, depend. But I would speak of it now as an illustration of the wise man’s strength. It was not a glowing and impassioned oration which he uttered then. The occasion was too grave for passion and for the play of fancy. His argument was measured, sedate, and laden with anxious care. It breathed peace and conciliation. It counseled forbearance, self-sacrifice, and patriotic devotion to the Union. It avoided the words and the allusions which excite prejudice and passion. But, in those calm words, what power ! I need not remind you how they went over the land like a healthful and reviving breeze in a stifling and noxious air. I need not tell you how they awakened confidence and hope.

I need not recall to your memory how they served to bind in fraternal brotherhood patriotic hearts from various parties and sections of the land, and to animate to new exertions their almost exhausted ingenuity, and their almost disheartened toil. But trace those words as they reach his home, and you will see what prodigious power the great man in whose purity of purpose there is confidence, possesses. Those words fell on unwilling ears. They clashed with the convictions of those whom he represented. He by whom they were spoken was not their master, but their representative and servant. The strong, thoughtful, earnest men of that region, do not give up their convictions to any or all dead or living men. Only by winning their honest belief, sentiment and feeling to his side, could he bring these men—descendants of those who would not give up their convictions to kings when they were in their power—to set the seal of their approbation to his course. And this is what that great speech did. It went among them, and the name, the fame, the past services, the great clear mind of its author, went with it; and it spoke in a still small voice, to their reason and their heart, their patriotism and their justice, until their convictions surrendered to his words. He dedicated to them the speech with the motto, “VERA PRO GRATIS”—“true words, rather than acceptable,”—and he might, in the next edition, have changed its form, and written “VERA ET GRATA,” “true *and* acceptable.” Such power few men have ever wielded; such greatness few have ever shown. These were the crises which presented him in

his true and majestic proportions to the country and the world.

His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone,  
For he was great ere fortune made him so ;  
And strifes, like mists that rise against the sun,  
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

Nor was he like those stars which only shine  
When to pale mariners they storms portend,  
He had his calmer influences, and his mien  
Did love and majesty together blend.

Such was the strength manifested by this wise man on the theatre of public life. It was not the mere power of intellect. It was the strength of one who, in the meaning of Solomon in the text, was wise. With his great mental powers there were joined religious and moral principles and character.

I do not wish to be considered as denying that Mr. Webster had his infirmities of character, and his faults and sins of life. What and how great they were I do not know. That they were much less and fewer than party passion and personal enmity would suggest, we may be sure. That he has been vilely slandered there can be no question. That he was ardently beloved, highly venerated, and entirely confided in by those who constituted his family circle, and those who shared his closest friendship, is well known. When those who have been intimately cognizant for years of the public and private life of an individual, entertain for him an enthusiastic reverence, and express a warm admiration for the daily moral beauty

of his life, we may safely, and we *must* in justice, discredit the grossly disparaging misrepresentations of those who know and see him only at a distance. Such is the feeling and the testimony of all his nearest friends. As one who has had the privilege to hold towards him, for more than five years past, the relation of Pastor—who has been recognized by him in that relation, and called by that endearing name, and admitted to the privileges which it involves—I feel constrained to say, and I say it with emphasis and without qualification, that *I* have never *known* any thing to disprove, and I have known many things to confirm, these friendly representations and this feeling of reverence and regard. Whatever may have been his infirmities, they were not such, in my judgment and belief, as ever to have corrupted his moral principles, debased his character and taste, and destroyed the life of his religion. I believe that Mr. Webster was a converted and religious man; and it was this element of his character that lent a peculiar strength and beauty to his writings, his affections, his public and his private life.

With a few more words upon this point I will dismiss a subject upon which it is painful for me to speak, but upon which I also feel it would be wrong in me, considering the relations which I have sustained to him, and the kindnesses I have received from him, to be altogether silent. These attacks upon his character, and the misgivings of portions of the public mind in consequence, which somewhat diminished the strength of an influence which, without some such abatement, it might have been too much for

any man, with safety to his soul, to have possessed, read a salutary lesson to public men. It shows them that no intellect, however gigantic, can sway the mind and heart of the people of this country, unless it is believed to be connected with purity of life and principle. It admonishes them, not only *to be*, but to be careful to seem, and to be seen to be, faithful and incorrupt.

And now I turn to those traits of character which were largely modified and influenced by his religious element and training, some beautiful illustrations of which have been presented in the public prints. Then it will remain for me to speak of his religious character and his closing hours.

There was in Mr. Webster a simple, unpretending, Doric dignity of character and demeanor, which corresponded with the greatness of his mind. Not from any thing that he *assumed*, but from what he *was*, he impressed all who associated with him with reverence, and many with awe.

From this dignity and self-respect he set an example of decorum, high courtesy and forbearance in debate and in writing, which has been rarely equaled, and never surpassed. It is stated that he has never been called to order in debate. He usually discussed subjects apart from the personalities in which they might be involved. He had none of the bitterness of mere party warfare. His mind seized the great principles which were involved in questions, and to them his strength was given. The editor of his writings states that he received but one injunction from Mr. Webster in reference to his productions,

and that was, that he should obliterate from them, if possible, every trace of party feuds and personalities; and he truly adds, that there was but little occasion for the injunction.

Another striking trait of Mr. Webster, in his public and private life, was the purity of his taste, and the elevation of his moral tone. One who has long been intimate with him declares that never in his life did he hear an impure thought or a profane expression come from his lips. And this there are none to gainsay. In all the six large volumes of his collected works, it would be as difficult to find a passage which contains a low sentiment, an impure allusion, a light or sneering word in reference to sacred things, or any other than the loftiest and noblest principles and sentiments, as it would be to find examples of bad taste, feeble reasoning, or tawdry rhetoric. In these productions he still lives. There his real character, there his true heart, there his great and high nature, still speak to his country and the world. All that was temporary and incidental, all that detraction whispered, and malignity surmised, is already fleeing from before a fame which will be, with posterity, as spotless as it will be transcendent.

But nothing in Mr. Webster was more beautiful than his large heart, the warm and tender affectionateness of his disposition. No man ever had more ardent and tenacious affection for his kindred, his early associates, and the chosen circle of his friends. Less demonstrative of his feelings before the world than many others, with manners which in general society and common intercourse sometimes



conveyed an impression of coldness, if not harshness, it is nevertheless true, that he was eminently loving and beloved within the sphere of home and of chosen friendships, and the private relations of life. Since his death some most touching evidences of this fact have appeared. If the cabinets of his nearest friends could be opened to the public eye, they would show a wealth, a beauty, a tenderness, a warmth, a delicate refinement of affection, that would prove this man of the largest brain to have been a man no less of the largest heart.

How touching that incident—you all have read it—of the hot day in July, when, a boy, he was making hay with his father; and they sat beneath the elm on a hay cock, and his father spoke to him of his toils and want of education, and he wept as he promised that he should be educated. You remember how when his father promised this he laid his head upon that kind father's shoulder, and wept tears of grateful joy. How exquisite his letter to "Master Tappan," the "good old schoolmaster" of his childhood. How beautiful his tributes to the memory of his father, mother, and elder brother. How affecting the direction in his letter, so late as March of this year, to John Taylor, the agent on his farm at Franklin: "*Take care to keep my mother's garden in good order.*" It was not of statesmanship and of the Presidency alone that he was thinking then. He had thoughts of his mother and of her garden; and that garden of his mother in his childhood's home, he would have kept in order, whoever might be an accep-

ted or rejected candidate. How beautiful the dedication of his works to his chosen friends and his nearest kindred; especially that to the memory of his deceased son and daughter —

“Go, gentle spirits, to your destined rest;  
While I, reversed our nature’s kindlier doom,  
Pour forth a father’s sorrow at your tomb.”

How does the beauty of that affection become sublime, when he calmly calls all his dear ones around his dying bed; and with words of affection, cheerfulness, and religious admonition, bids them a last farewell.

This affection flowed forth over a large circle of beloved friends. With them, his intercourse was marked by the most endearing courtesies and kindnesses. There was a cordiality and a genial cheerfulness in these friendships which gave them a peculiar charm. Here he let his mind recreate and play. Here it was that the beauty of his mind often came forth and gamboled over its sleeping or reposing power. Here it was that his fine fancy, of whose use he was so sparing in his public efforts, had free range. He would not allow her to go forth with his reason, lest she should beguile it, when it was occupied in the grave tasks of patriotism and duty; but he kept her at home, by the side of his heart, that she might brighten and sing to the domestic circle. It was a delicate Ariel, whom this mighty Prospero would employ only in the service of the affections. If the memories and the cabinets of his family and friends could

be thrown open, it would be seen that this man of the largest reason and affections, was a man also of the most beautiful and playful fancy.

But on these features of his character I have too long lingered. Let me, in conclusion, speak of his religious character and his closing hours.

Mr. Webster, in early life, before his removal to Boston, was a communicant in a Congregational Orthodox Church in New Hampshire. After this removal to Boston, he attended the Unitarian Church. About ten years, since he became a communicant of the Episcopal Church in this city. During the five years and a half of my residence in this city, he has been a regular attendant and communicant in this Church.

Of the entire system of religious opinions entertained by Mr. Webster I have no authority to speak. But in the conversations which I have had with him on religious subjects, his sentiments on several topics have been freely expressed. His preference for the Episcopal Church rested chiefly on his admiration of its liturgy, and its general conservative character. He had no sympathy with, but rather a profound conviction of the folly of that churchmanship which stands with its face to the past, and its back to the future. He loved most that preaching which was plain, earnest, affectionate, personal, and expository, rather than that which was general and discursive. His conversation was always understood by me to proceed upon the admission, on his part, of what are called the distinctive and evangelical truths of the Gospel.

I have known his most emphatic approbation to have been expressed of sermons in which these truths were most distinctly presented.

Mr. Webster was exceedingly fond of discoursing and conversing on religious subjects. I never remember to have visited him, when the circumstances admitted of it, that he did not enter upon the subject. I particularly remember a call which I made upon him on the third or fourth evening after the delivery of his great speech of the 7th of March, 1850. He was alone, and somewhat indisposed. But at once, and with great interest — apparently forgetful of public affairs, at a moment when most men would have been keenly alive to know how their course would be responded to or approved — he entered upon a most interesting discussion of moral, philosophical and religious questions. Among other subjects, he dwelt much on the tendency of men to rest upon church, or services, or sacraments, or doctrines, or something else, for salvation and acceptance, rather than just that spiritual purity, and homage, and service which God demands; and he gave me a sketch of a series of sermons which might be preached from the text, “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” One who had seen and heard him that evening, would have supposed that he was a sage and philosopher, whose interest was absorbed in these great themes. It would not have occurred to him that he was, at that moment, the most eminent of our public men, at the

most critical period of his own and the nation's life. The incident impressed me with his singular greatness.

It was my purpose, with Mr. Webster's consent and aid, to collect all that he had written and said upon the subject of religion, and present it in a volume to the world. This purpose was delayed, that he might furnish me with some of the published and manuscript productions on this subject, which he had written in early life. His numerous duties and frequent indispositions from time to time, prevented the fulfillment of his promise to furnish me with these materials. I was led to suppose that there might be no inconsiderable amount of such materials scattered in some periodicals, which were written while he was a student at law, or during the earlier years of his legal life. He mentioned an argument which he had written on the Immortality of the Soul, which I trust may be recovered.

But I must hasten to a close. Some of the incidents of his closing hours have been given to the world. They show him to have been, in death, peaceful, majestic and resigned. From my friend, Dr. Jeffries, his attending physician, a pious member of our communion, I have received a more full detail of the incidents of his dying hours than has yet appeared. They are in the highest degree interesting and pleasing. They assuage our sorrow. They confirm our hope.

From the letter I take the following :

“ I was assured, early in the sickness of Mr Webster, that he understood the danger of his situation. As the

disease progressed, he knew that it would be soon fatal ; and he was the first to fix upon a definite time when he should die. But he was not disposed to speak of it, as I think, because he knew it would be distressing to his friends. He *acted* on this knowledge from the earliest period of my attendance ; every thing he did had a reference to this result. I had no conversation with him on the subject of his death until it was near, and but little on serious subjects ; that little, however, showed distinctly his views on this important subject, and together with what I otherwise heard and observed, served to illustrate satisfactorily his religious character.

“I have not time, at so short a notice, to explain the circumstances and incidents of his sick chamber. I therefore send you only a few *facts* for your consideration and use. I would observe that his *epitaph* has not as yet been printed.

“If you analyze that remarkable embodiment of his thoughts, you will find a full expression of his faith under the teachings of the Spirit. His reference to the atonement you will perceive by what followed my recital of the hymn. I have no doubt that he was an experimental Christian. May we not confidently hope that he, who so often spoke with the truth and clearness of a prophet’s vision, uttered under a Divine guidance those remarkable words, ‘I shall be to-night in life, and joy, and blessedness?’

“The few facts I have to present to you, are as follows :



“On leaving Mr. Webster for the night at half past eleven, on Saturday, October 16th, 1852, I asked him if I should repeat to him a hymn at parting, to which he gave a ready assent; when I repeated the hymn which begins

‘There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.’

“He gave very serious attention to the recital, and at the close he said, ‘Amen, amen; even so, come Lord Jesus.’ This was uttered with great solemnity. He afterwards asked me if I remembered the verse in one of Watts’ hymns on the thought of dying at the foot of the Cross, and repeated these lines, with remarkable energy and feeling:

‘Should worlds conspire to drive me hence,  
Moveless and firm this heart should lie,  
*Resolved*, (for that’s my last defence,)  
If I must perish — *here* to die.’

After this he said, that ‘he owed it to his fellow-countrymen to express his deep conviction of the divine inspiration of the gospel of Jesus Christ,’ and had embodied some thoughts which he gave to Mr. Edward Curtis.

“He repeated the text, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,’ and then, what he had given to be inscribed upon his tombstone, which was as follows:

“‘Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.’

“‘Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from

the vastness of the Universe, in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith which is in me : but my heart has always assured and reassured me, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine reality.

“ ‘The Sermon on the Mount can not be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience.

“ ‘The whole history of man proves it.

‘DANIEL WEBSTER.’

“ He afterwards said that he wished also to leave, somewhere, his testimony in favor of early piety ; that he was familiar with all the great poets, Pope, Dryden, Cowper, Milton, and others, but that the hymns of *Watts*, from his cradle hymns to his version of the Psalms, and other deeper hymns, were always uppermost in his mind and on his tongue ; that he could repeat them faster than four scribes could write them down.

“ He conveyed very strongly, by his remarks, that his early religious instruction and acquirements had always had the most profound and abiding influence upon his mind and life.

“ I was informed by Mrs. Webster, about a fortnight before his death, that he had been speaking to her of his case, and expressed the apprehension that it would terminate fatally ; he then appeared to consider his preparation for the event, and clasping his hands he said, with deep emotion, ‘ I *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ.’

“A short time before he became unable to express his thoughts, he appeared to be engaged in silent prayer, (as I often noticed his appearance to indicate during his sickness,) when he gave utterance to something — a few words of which were low and lost by me; that which followed was, ‘but whatsoever I do, Almighty God, receive me to thyself for Jesus Christ’s sake.’ He also exclaimed, ‘I shall be, to-night, in life, and joy, and blessedness.’

“On Saturday, October 23d, about 8 o’clock, a. m., he requested that all in the room should leave it, except myself. He had just vomited, and was still sitting erect in the bed; I had taken the place of the person who had previously supported him at his back, and was behind him. He asked if all had left the room. I answered, ‘yes.’ He then, in a perfectly clear and distinct voice, said, ‘Doctor, you have carried me through the night, and I think you will get me through the day; I shall die to-night.’ This was spoken emphatically, but without any agitation, and was followed by minute directions for what he wished consequently to be done. During the day he gave particular attention to many lesser, as well as some important, matters of business.

“Could I, my dear sir, have delayed this reply, I should have written much more fully, and furnished you with more of the occurrences of his sickness and death, especially a prayer which he made after executing his will; but I have time only for these few irregular remarks.”

Oh, my brethren, if this strong man, in life and death, throws himself like a child on the provisions of mercy in

the gospel of Jesus Christ, what shall we, in our weakness, do? What will become of *us* on a dying bed, and in the eternal world, if we live without God and die without Christ?

Receive, I pray you, the living and dying testimony of him who knew what were the wants of the greatest, equally with the humblest, of men, and has pointed out where they may be supplied. Could he speak to us, he would need but to repeat his last words on earth, to assure us how wise and well it is to trust our salvation to an Omnipotent Redeemer. He might say to us — Because of reliance on him “*I still live,*” and living, realize how poor and dim was the life of earth compared with this life of heaven. “*I still live,*” and my life is the surpassing fulfillment of the anticipation with which I passed through death, that I should be, on that night of sorrow to those whom I left behind, “in life, and joy, and blessedness.” We catch the words from his dying lips; we hear them now bursting from his glorified and enraptured spirit; and that which, dying, was his hope and strength, is our consolation, as we bend over his tomb — LIFE, JOY, BLESSEDNESS!



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THANKSGIVING DISCOURSES

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OUR UNION—GOD'S GIFT.



A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

TRINITY CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1850.



# I.

## D I S C O U R S E .

THE name which this day bears indicates our theme. "Thanksgiving for National blessings" is the name of the day ; and National blessings are the subject of our discourse.

NATIONAL BLESSINGS ! They are as large as the land we occupy. They are as varied as its climes, and soils, and products. Yet, with all their variety, they have, as a whole, the same individuality as the broad continent over which they are spread.

Since the last Thanksgiving-day, our country has stretched itself from sea to sea. An American citizen may pass, East and West, four thousand miles, and see the sun rise over and set behind no hills that are not his. The sun greets us with his morning salutation from the Atlantic, and breathes over us his farewell evening benediction from the Pacific. "It is a good land and a large."

The very extent of our land—the occupation of a country so gigantic by one race, of one origin and tongue ; and their union under one system of free government and just law, like that under whose shelter we are thriving, is itself a subject for vast thanksgiving.

It is a new thing in the history of the world. Great Empires, in past times, have been composed of diverse

people, whose races, histories, languages, institutions, arts, sciences, and general culture, were most various and conflicting. They have been *conglomerates*, fused into a shapeless and heterogeneous mass by the fires of despotism. The style in which those vast Empires were addressed was this—"Nebuchadnezzar the King, unto all *people, nations, and languages.*" Such were the Assyrian and the Babylonian Empires. Such was the dominion of Alexander. Such the Roman Empire. Such the Kingdoms of Charlemagne and of the Saracens. Such is the character of the present British Empire. Never before was there a land so vast as ours, under one government, inhabited by one people, speaking one language, and subject to one law. It is a new thing in the history of the world.

And it is a thing which it required a long history to accomplish. God preserved this continent from being inhabited, until, in another land, men were gradually trained to begin the work which is here and now in progress. Long and dreary was the road, slow and difficult the advance, to those principles of religious and civil freedom, which, under God's blessing, our Fathers reached; and whose adoption in this new land, on this large unoccupied field, has made us what we are.

At the time of the Reformation gross darkness rested on the people. They were ignorant alike of their real religious and political rights and duties. But when light is let into a human soul, it will not shine, at a monarch's bidding, on a single point, and leave all others in their olden darkness. Its direct rays may be gathered there,

but its diffused brightness will illumine all the building. Henry would let one broad beam of light into the minds of his people that they might see beneath it the monstrousness of the Pope's claim to spiritual supremacy. Many saw it, and saw, moreover, by the same light, the equal monstrousness of his own assumptions. And now when one thoughtful and brave spirit after another began to discern and proclaim their wrongs and rights — when the vague yearnings and dim questionings of oppressed generations worked themselves out at last into clear consciousness, and definite conviction, and firm resolve — when those claims to the God-given and inalienable rights of men and nations which were but muttered under Elizabeth, and spoken with “bated breath” under James, rang out with clarion clearness in the startled ear of Charles — then the creatures of power began to arrange the stupidities of traditional despotism into a system. The slavish scheme of kingly government by divine right was then matured by the sycophantic divines and statesmen of the days of the Stuarts. Salmasius, on the Continent, Sir Robert Filmer and the Non-Juring Bishops and Divines, in England, were its principal supporters. They claim that in direct descent from the grey Patriarchs of the world, kings inherit an absolute, unbounded, irresponsible authority; and that passive, unquestioning obedience to these delegates of Heaven, is but true loyalty to God. Greater slavishness of spirit than that which could devise such a scheme, it is difficult to conceive. It may become a duty to bow in *practical submission* to an absolute author-



ity: But that men should elevate such authority into the venerable seat of law; that they should see in *mere power* an overawing augustness to inspire their reverence; that they should waft towards such a shrine the incense of their praise; that they should hail this vile Herod of despotism as a God, because his golden armor of prosperity and power glitters in the sunlight—all this surely shows the abjectness of man, and proves that Satan spoke a mocking lie when he declared, “Ye shall be as Gods.”

These views were confuted, with superfluous power and logic, by Milton, and Locke, and Sidney. In the place of it another and more liberal system was substituted. They sought to find an ultimate ground for the authority of governors and the rights and duties of the governed in a supposed *social compact*. Men were contemplated as in a state of nature, each man standing alone, and having certain rights, and all agreeing to enter into organized society, and to give up a certain portion of their rights for the sake of the security and the advantages which a governed community provides. By this supposed compact the extent of the prerogatives of the magistrate, and the immunities of the citizen, were to be determined. This theory, though it involves some just principles of government, has many and great defects. It has no historical basis. It is a mere theory, having never been realized in the known life of any nation. It is not *written down*, like “*Magna Charta*,” and “*The bill of rights*.” Like what is called natural religion, it depends on what each man finds his own mind to say upon the subject; and therefore

its principles are fluctuating and uncertain. It furnishes no fixed and sure basis for such a practical administration of government as shall give men just law and regulated liberty. The speculative politicians of the Revolution of 1688 endeavored to shape their practical reforms, and to take their enlarged liberties, from this then favorite scheme of political philosophy. But at a later period the reforms that have been urged and the ameliorations which have been effected in the British Constitution, have been based upon a principle which was obtained from us—which was born in this Western World—the great, new, true, imperishable principle, *the right of men, under God, to govern themselves*—the right of living men to say that they themselves will determine the constitution and laws under which they will live. The men of England, of whom we speak, said to each other, “let us find out from the conditions of the social compact what are our rights and duties.” But our Fathers said, “Come, brothers, let us decide what *we* shall do—what *we*, free men, shall adopt as our constitution and our law.”

And this brings me towards the point at which I would have you pause in admiration of the over-ruling Providence of God. From the midst of the despotic theories and practical oppressions of the mother land came a body of colonists to our shores, who were, for the most part, earnest and religious men, whose resistance and hatred of man's tyranny were coupled with a most absolute loyalty of spirit to God's rule, to duty, and to conscience. Here it was, in our colonies, that the great principle of which I

have spoken — *the right of men to govern themselves* — was born and grew. It was a lesson in advance of those learned by their liberal brethren in the mother land. They reached it by virtue of the more quickened and independent thought which their position favored ; and no less by the peculiarities of their colonial condition, by which they were enabled, and sometimes obliged, to realize the principle in their practice. This principle it was, which lay beneath the rallying cry of the Revolution — “ No taxation without representation.” This principle was embodied in every State Constitution, and in the Articles of the Confederation. It constitutes the introductory sentence of our present Constitution. It is the first political lisp of our children. It is the last and grandest conclusion of the high speculations of our statesmen. It is the rule of all legislation. It is the test of all measures. And, as all things good and true are most apt to be abused, it is brought forward to cover and consecrate all wild, disorganizing, and selfish schemes, which would substitute the individual for the collective will, and self-license without law, for self-government by law.

On this day of National Thanksgiving, when our recent enlargement as a nation and our present peculiar condition invite us to the theme, we call your attention to

I. The character of the fundamental principle of our Government ; to

II. The wonderful Providence of God by which it has been enabled “ to spread undivided ” and “ operate unspent ” over a country so vast and varied ; and to

III. The great advantage to themselves and to the world, of the Union under one system of free government and law, of one great people, inhabiting one great land, whose main boundaries are oceans, and which includes within itself all the climates of the world.

I. It is needful, even in our own land, to vindicate the fundamental principle of our Constitution—the right of self-government. It has of late, in Europe and at home, been associated with so many Godless theories, such evil passions, and such disorganizing measures, that it is important to rescue it from misuse and misunderstanding.

1. As adopted and understood by our fathers, this principle did not involve the idea that man owes obedience but to *self*, and that *self* is the ultimate ground and reason and law of his responsibility. The term “*self-government*” has been thus sometimes misinterpreted, and sometimes misrepresented. It has been thought to be a kind of impiety that man, the creature of God, should talk of the right of governing himself. It was not, however, a throwing off of allegiance to all authority but that of his own reason and will and conscience, that this term intended to express. The claim was not in opposition to the just authority of God, but to the groundless, usurped, and tyrannical authority of man.

2. Nay, the principle as it was given to us by our fathers, and as we should hold it, might be rather named the *duty* than the *right* of self-government. First of all, the men in whose souls this truth was born recognized the duty of *absolute obedience to God*. Nothing must be

allowed to stand in the way of their duty to him. Then it must be their right, aye, and their duty, to disown allegiance to any government and law which prohibits them from doing their duty to Him ; it must be their right and their duty to govern themselves in such a way as that they may be obedient to the government of 'God. Such was the spirit in which this great truth originated. It was not in a spirit of lawlessness and willfulness, and of reference to self as the ultimate ground of all rights and duties ; but it was in a spirit of devoted loyalty to law—the highest law which can govern a moral and responsible creature—that the principle of self-government was born.

3. Nor is this principle to be sneered into contempt by the assertion that it involves a want of infelt and practical reverence for law—that it robs law of its sanctity and makes it level with the mere obligation of a bargain. On the contrary, to the laws which self-governing men enact for themselves, and for their own government, there are sanctions of peculiar dignity and power. The sneer proceeds on the supposition that laws made for men by a power above them, in which they have no share, will secure an homage and reverence which they cannot feel for constitutions and enactments which proceed from themselves. Let us see. Take some despotic Monarchy. The law comes down to the people from the strong palaces of power. It is flashed in their eye from the gleaming points of myriad bayonets and swords. It is thundered in their ear by the artillery and the drum. I know that for



ages, down-trodden men have gazed with stupid awe on this array of power, and bowed with deep submission before its awful mandates. But what sort of reverence is this to law? It is the craven stoop of the spirit before mere power! It is a government which is *outside* of the soul, and does not fix itself in the innermost conviction of the mind, the true homage of the conscience, and the warm affections of the heart. But when a great people thus enact—"WE in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution"—when this enactment comes from a nation of whom I am one, then I hear a voice of law which sounds to my soul like the majestic echo of the voice of God. It does not appeal to my fears. It does not crush my spirit into abjectness by the rod of power. But I acknowledge it as an obligation which I personally have assumed; a real duty which I recognize and feel; a grand privilege which I enjoy. Now here is reverence for law, the only reverence which deserves the name. The principle of obedience has seated itself within the soul. It grasps the conscience. It sways the whole moral nature. The grandest homage, that of intelligent, conscious moral obedience, is rendered to the law.

4. Nor is the true principle of self-government *irreligious* in itself, or in its tendency. Some good men have been led to fear, from its abuses, that it is a proud and



Godless scheme, which can not be reconciled with the principles of the Word of God. It will be an evil thing alike for God's truth and Church, and for the Republic, if such a sentiment widely prevail among pious men. It is heard sometimes in conversation, though seldom seen in print. But if it prevail, it will array the State against the Church as adverse to freedom. It will make the Church regard the State as based on principles hostile to the progress of the gospel. Better, far, that it should be cordially recognized as a principle perfectly consistent with the religion of the Saviour. Better that it should be rescued from false glosses, and shown to be a system into which the religious mind may throw itself with unhesitating earnestness.

Surely it may do so. Surely this system, rightly viewed, is every way favorable to religion. We have seen that it was the work of religious men. We see that it guaranties the absolute liberty of every soul to serve and worship God according to its own convictions. Nor does it make meaningless, as some have supposed, those many Scriptures which declare to us that the powers which be are ordained of God; that we should be subject to governors and powers for the Lord's sake; and that those who resist the power, resist the ordinance of God. There is a harmony between those two truths, viz: that men have a right to form for themselves a government, and yet, that government is the ordinance of God, and obedience to its laws obedience to him. That harmony should be plainly shown and fully recognized. We should

not allow ourselves to stand in doubt whether our whole system of government is an organized revolt against the authority of Heaven. Government is an ordinance of God. It is his will that men should exist in organized and governed society. The State, therefore, is as clearly a divine institution as is the family. But the particular *form* which organized society shall assume, is not prescribed by God. He has not fixed it by divine command, in the form of a Monarchy, an Oligarchy, or a Republic. The form of government is the ordinance of man. Government itself is the ordinance of God. Now, we have no reason to doubt but that that form of government which best secures the rights and happiness of man is, in his regard, the most acceptable and best. Yet he himself has set us the example, in his dealings with the Jews, in granting them a King, of allowing a government to be established, which was not, in itself, the best, or the most acceptable to Him, but the best which the then condition of people would enable them to enjoy. So that Divinity belongs to the State and not to the form of the State. To us, then, as Republicans, who have framed our own system of government, belong all these declarations which aver that government is the ordinance of God, and that obedience to its commands is obedience to Him. We can take them and obey them in all the fullness and sacredness of their meaning. As the family relation is divine, and the duties connected with it the subjects of divine command, so is the State from God, and allegiance to it is obedience to Him. And in this view, patriotism

and devotion to our free Constitution receive sanction and obtain sacredness from the Word of God.

5. The result then is that this great principle is the "last word" of political science. It is the latest and best birth of time. It is that ultimate truth in government towards which all efforts for freedom—all partial emancipations from tyranny—have tended, but have never reached. It is a lesson in advance of any learned in the struggles for freedom in our mother-land. It is in its own nature grounded on supreme loyalty to God. It is not without law, but creative of law. It includes highest and truest reverence for the law which it creates. It is consistent with, and it is a principle through which may be expressed, a deep and true religiousness of spirit. Favored indeed is the land in which such a principle is vital, and practical, and pervading. That it originated and lives here, is a proof of a degree of national advancement, in that which constitutes true progress, beyond that of all other nations of the earth. Under it prosperity must spring, human rights be best guarded, the human powers best developed, and human happiness most widely spread.

Then is human nature developed to its loftiest stature, and best proportion, and most real strength, when it is placed under the influence of the Gospel and the grace of God, in a system of government where man's liberty is held as his birth-right, and loyalty to the State is acknowledged as his own conscious moral duty to just laws, framed by himself, *in obedience to the moral laws that bind him as a creature of God.* Laws when

thus framed are elevated from the rank of "ordinances of man," which they are in their form, to "ordinances of God," which they are in their essence and their obligation.

II. And now let me call your attention to the wonderful providence of God by which this principle, unknown in the old world, and for which the old world was unprepared, was made to grow up and spread over this broad land.

1. Our first train of remark, in this connection, would naturally be that which we have already made in tracing this great idea of constitutional self-government. We saw how men were prepared in England by its history to come to this country with a strong sense of their rights and wrongs; and how their circumstances in this wild land favored the growth of the great political truth on the prevalence of which the future civil and social progress and happiness of the race depends. How can we fail to see in that series of events the hand of God! There was no country in Europe in which this great principle could have worked itself out into practice for centuries to come. This is proved by the history of the Commonwealth of England, which ran, immediately and inevitably, into a one-will despotism. Therefore, the men who had advanced farthest towards this principle were transplanted to a new and almost unoccupied continent. How wonderfully did God keep this great land, far off in the ocean, from being discovered and occupied, until he had prepared men to take it in possession. And when they were placed here, how did God, by the force of the circumstances in which

they were placed, teach them to lay hold of the great truth of man's right and duty, under God, of framing the laws to which he should be subject! The lesson was, as it were, forced upon him. He learned it, we may say, by having first been compelled to practice it. The colonial legislatures, familiar with the wants of the colonies, too distant from the seat of power to be overawed by its authority, or to rely habitually upon its counsel and direction, learned the right of self-government by its practice, rather than by any speculations on its justice anterior to its enjoyment. Thus did God's providence train the men of the colonial days for that unequalled display of political wisdom and sagacity which was developed previous to, and during, and subsequent to, the Revolution.

2. Nor in this thing alone has God shown himself to be with us as our guide and teacher. He was with our Fathers in the formation of our present Constitution. If God was ever visible in history it was surely when our Fathers fixed upon our present form of government. The union of many independent States, under one General Government, is the most marked peculiarity of our political condition. It is as new, as a mode of union of States, as is the principle of the right of self-government for the single State. It is a wonderful and strange arrangement. It is considered by all thoughtful and philosophic minds, at home and abroad, that have studied and understand it, as the master-piece of political wisdom. It will be, we believe, the admiration of the world for centuries to come, whether it shall be realized in other theatres, or limited to



our own. It reconciles apparent contradictions. It realizes seemingly conflicting results, in that it leaves each of the States in their separate political rights and organizations, while it binds them all in one general government, which is as effective for all good purposes, as if it were a consolidated nationality; and as favorable to all the real rights and liberties of the States, as if it were but a loose league of sovereignties. The commentaries on this feature of the Constitution, of some of the ablest minds under whose counsels it was adopted, are regarded as the most golden sayings of our masters of political sentences. It is this feature of our government which enables it to stretch itself from sea to sea, without gathering dangerous strength at the centre, or exhibiting as dangerous weakness, by its weight, at the circumference. It is a system of wheels within wheels; but, like the mystic structure of Ezekiel, they are all informed by one spirit, and the various inner play of the separate wheels is carried on beneath a great and all-embracing wheel, and all of the combined parts move on in the same direction.

3. But if ever men were led by the hand of Providence and taught, step by step, what next to do, it was the men who framed this Government—a Government in which, when they constructed it, they discerned much wisdom, but in which there were more and greater excellences than they could see. There was no political Jupiter, out of whose brain this Minerva sprang, full grown. Read the history of it and you will see how unconsciously, beyond their own purposes or expectations, were men led on to its



adoption. First, a few men from different States met to talk of trade, and separated with the idea of a united nationality. And when the Convention was formed, how singularly did obstacles to union, seemingly the most insuperable, give way! How did God smooth the way for the adoption of article after article, of that grand charter of our national liberty and law! And what is most remarkable and instructive to observe is, that great as were the wisdom, sagacity, and foresight of the framers of that immortal instrument, they were not possessed of it all when they began their discussion, but they were taught much of it, day by day, and lesson by lesson, here a little and there a little, as the debates progressed. They were forced into many of their measures which have proved the wisest, by the stress of the providential circumstances in which they were placed. They did not at once adopt them, because they saw the wisdom of them; but they saw the wisdom of them after they were forced to adopt them. The existing state of things set them on the search for some principles and measures, which but for that state of things, they might never have adopted. It is evident, then, that our Constitution was not a *manufacture*, but a *growth*. It was not *made*, but it *became*.

4. In reference to this very feature of the relation of the separate States to the General Government, which is now regarded as the crowning excellence of the Constitution, was the interposition of God most singularly manifested. The facts have been often detailed, and therefore, a general reference to them will suffice. On the question,

I believe, of the representation of the States in the Senate, the Convention came to a pause. Agreement on the subject seemed impossible. The whole plan of Union seemed to be on the verge of ruin. States threatened to withdraw. Under circumstances of great excitement and alarm, the venerable Franklin counseled an adjournment for some days, and recommended that when they again assembled, their deliberations should be opened with prayer. It was done. The dissenting States, at the reöpening of the Convention, agreed to the measure they had so strenuously resisted, rather than that the Union should not be formed. Thus against the preferences of many, even of a majority, and after the acknowledgment that they were at their wits end, and a resort to God in prayer, was that feature of the Union perfected, which is now regarded, with scarcely no dissenting voices, as its crowning excellence and wisdom. Say not that God was not there! Say not that this came altogether from the wisdom of our fathers! Rather let us, on this day of National Thanksgiving, gratefully confess that then the Lord of Hosts was with us, the God of Jacob was our refuge.

III. And now having vindicated the character of our fundamental principle of government, and shown its truth, its moral elevation, its religious value, and its influence on national progress and elevation, and having noticed the wonderful providence of God in having provided a birth-place, a home, and a theatre for the extension of this ameliorating principle, embodied in political institutions of singular wisdom and great practical excellence; let me

direct your attention to some of the great advantages to themselves and to the world, of the Union under one system of government and law, of a people of almost entirely one race and tongue, inhabiting one wide and wondrous land. I say to *some* of those advantages, for they are greater and more numerous than I can describe or know.

1. Well did the Father of his Country say, that "the unity of government which constitutes us one people is a main pillar in the edifice of our real *independence*." Our real independence depends not only upon our power to preserve our rights; but it is great and real in proportion to the absence of necessity to use that power. If I, standing alone, have just power enough to defend myself from an enemy, and am yet compelled to use it *all*, I may say that I am independent of him — and it will be, in one sense, true. But if I am in union with a band of men, so that my enemy would not molest me, nor call upon me to exert my own power or that of my confederates, then would my independence be more complete and real. The former state of safety, on condition of constant vigilance and exertion, could scarcely, with propriety, be called real independence. So it would be with States, if they stood alone. Their independence, singly, could not be so absolute as it is when they are united.

2. And how vastly is the prosperity of all the States increased by Union under one government! The *material interests* of the country are thus incalculably subserved." In a greater variety of ways than can occur to my mind—

from the interchange of the products of the various portions of the country with no commercial restrictions—from the common use of every improvement and invention in the sciences and arts—from a uniform system of customs, and taxes, and in a thousand other ways, the wealth and prosperity of each section of the country will be prodigiously increased. The best and most convincing commentary on this head would be a history of the Confederation. And let it be remembered that, in proportion to a country's prosperity, will be the number who can secure the leisure and means of education, and of general culture and improvement.

3. In Union lies our best security for *peace*. Foreign wars are for us henceforth, happily, almost an impossibility. But if instead of one broad fraternal united government, we are divided into many States, how difficult it would be, with inevitable jealousies, diverse interests, mutual reproaches—how difficult to preserve peace! Nay, how impossible! And the manifold and fearful evils of this state of things I need not attempt to portray. How it would retard industry, check education, destroy religion, consume the resources of the country, multiply swarms of idle and greedy officials, corrupt the morals and destroy the prosperity of every State, yourselves at once can see. When Israel and Judah separated, each State maintained an army double the number previously maintained by both united; and from that period each kingdom was engaged in destructive wars, and both hastened, with rival speed, to ruin. However it may have

been with us in times past, it is certain that with our present seemingly conflicting interests—only seemingly and temporarily conflicting, we believe—our condition, without union, would be one of active war, or of armed and suspicious truce. And war between the different portions of this confederacy would be one of the most saddening and dismal pages of the history of this earth. Never were a people so interwoven by the nearest and tenderest relationships as we are over all this broad Continent. It would send a personal sorrow into every household. It would gather a vast national woe over all the Continent. It would set loose wild ruin to stride and trample, with ferocious footsteps, over all the fair fields and peaceful dwellings of the land. And in that warfare there would fall more illustrious victims than ever before strewed a battle-field. There would fall such a national prosperity and happiness as the sun never shone upon before. There would fall, shrieking, the hopes of the millions of struggling victims of oppression in every land. There would fall the fair and venerable forms of liberty, justice, security, morality, and religion, and over their unhonored graves military despotisms would flaunt their bloody banners, and lead on their abject myrmidons to new contests and still desolating victories. Oh, what an unspeakable gift it is from God, that this day, through the immense length and breadth of our land, we can gather in our houses of prayer, and praise him as a united people! What devout thanksgivings do we owe to him—oh God, give



us grace to render it!—that we are still the United States!

4. But even if it were possible to avoid these woes if disunited, yet by the Union of this great land, under one system of government, what increased diffusion is given to education—how truth flies from point to point—how the discovery of one becomes the property of all—how the large fields and the magnificent rewards opened to genius and perseverance stimulate the faculties to their highest exercise! How, too, under such a state of things, do the ordinary and narrow local prejudices and feelings which are the growth of peculiar and prescriptive institutions based on no fixed principles of law and justice—prejudices which retard the discovery of truth—how do these, under such circumstances, give way! There is no reason in seeming interest, or in self defense, why we should uphold any false principles in government, in morals, and in science. What a field is opened here for the spread of truth and the development of mind! All great truths and principles are free to perambulate the land. We know that not only nations separated by a mountain chain “abhor each other,” but that systems of philosophy, morality, and science, separated by no greater distance, abhor each other too, and are in bitter conflict. “Three degrees of latitude,” says Pascal, “upset all the principles of Jurisprudence.” Not only does such a Union foster education because, by securing peace, it gives the means and opportunity for its enjoyment, but because it diffuses just principles over all the land; it



breaks up prejudices ; it will not let errors lurk and work in corners, but drags them out and makes them speak and vindicate themselves before a great and sagacious tribunal. The false systems that might have continued to parade and impose themselves on little cliques and communities, are not allowed to remain there, but are placed, by the press, upon a conspicuous stand, where all the nation can see and hear them, and are there made to give an account of themselves ; and are questioned and cross-questioned, so that all may judge whether they are true or false. Never before was there a country so favorable for the discovery and spread of true principles on every subject of practical concernment or theoretical speculation.

5. And this leads me to remark, that such a broad, various country, united into one, is calculated to develop the general national character into a largeness and strength which it could not otherwise attain. It would seem that in such a country, narrowness of mind could not be a national characteristic. The wise Ulysses was the wiser for having seen so many men and many lands. And vast numbers of our citizens, keeping within the bounds of their own country, have equaled Ulysses in his wanderings, if not in his wisdom. This constant interchange of views with men of different minds and of different culture—this personal insight into things, which often show us that they are neither so bad nor so good as we supposed—all these advantages must give breadth and liberality to character. And I think he must be greatly prejudiced, who

will not grant this to be a national characteristic. Old bed-ridden notions and prejudices which turn and groan and fret and die, on the minds of men who are in contracted spheres, cannot be allowed to lie long on the restless minds of the citizens of a Republic such as ours. We are called in derision, sometimes, the “universal nation;” and there is a truth and an unintended compliment, too, in the sneer. The great and philosophic author of “Spirit of the Laws,” has a striking and beautiful speculation on the effect which the natural character of a country has on the character of a people; and he illustrates it, if I remember rightly, by the effeminacy and the impassioned fire of the Oriental, the strong, stern energy of the Roman, the beautiful and varied genius of the Greek, and the free, brave spirit of the mountain Switzer. Now, if there be truth, as there is beauty, in these speculations — which I think can not be doubted — then is the land in which we are placed calculated to foster a national character of ample width and of just proportions and of real strength. It is a land including within itself the peculiarities of all other lands. The intermingling of families and of whole neighborhoods, east and west, and north and south, diffuses the national characteristics, and blends some of the elements of each into almost every individual. A *composite* of character is thus gradually formed, which furnishes us with as many fine specimens of man as, we believe, this world can show. We believe that nowhere else can so many balanced, wise, liberal, well proportioned characters be found, as “in our

own land." And never have we been so convinced of it as of late. The difficulties through which our country recently has passed, have developed an amount and quality of patriotism and true greatness for which we may be permitted to be grateful, if we may not be proud. And it has developed itself in opposition to seeming interest and in the midst of threatening clamors. The public men of a Republic like our own, may well be regarded as true representatives of its general character. And in every part of this great united Confederacy, they have shown a grandeur of patriotism and a largeness of spirit which would seem to verify the speculations of Montesquieu, and to show that they were bred to their magnificent proportions by the sounding and spreading oceans, by the everlasting hills, and by the vast illimitable wildernesses of our glorious land. They have risen, north and south, east and west, and sent forth words of majesty and power, and by the most solemn oaths of religious patriotism, have sworn that no one shall take any part of their one great country from their hearts; that no sacrilegious hand should remove from them the tomb of Washington, the fields of Bunker Hill, of Yorktown, of Saratoga, and all the consecrated spots of our nation's history. They have shown us that, in the wide sweep of their affections, the whole of what constitutes their country is contained; that there every mountain rises, every river runs, every green savannah spreads. Oh, who does not feel that he would become a dwarfed and a meaner thing, if he were not permitted to call all this fair heritage "*my country*," and

to say when he perused or listened to the descriptions of her magnificent lakes, her winding rivers, her awful mountains, her golden hills, her waving fields, and her teeming marts, “this is *my own*, my native land.”

6. My friends, I avow it as the object of all these remarks, to make you love and prize your institutions, your government, and *all your country*. I think it is the duty of every minister of God on this day, and at this crisis, to do the same. I might, on suitable occasions, speak of our country's danger and her sins; but now I would speak only of her glories and her capabilities for progress and usefulness, that you may renew to her your vows of loyalty and love. What, — and I speak with the full recollection that I am a minister of God, — what could be so disastrous to the spread and the influence of the gospel as the breaking up of the Union of these States? and what could be more favorable to the extension of religious knowledge and institutions, than the present united Government? Holding myself, therefore, as the minister of God, consecrated to the one work of preaching and extending the gospel and the church of God, I consider myself as directly engaged in my proper office, when, summoned by the civil authority to praise God for national blessings, I select out our UNION as the great all-embracing blessing under whose shelter, liberty, security, prosperity, the arts and sciences may spread and flourish, and with them, to consecrate and bless them all, the religion of the Saviour. In every blessing which I have enumerated, I see a handmaid to the religion of my Saviour. In

the prevalence of just principles of human government, there is a preparation for the reception of the laws of God's moral administration. In the independence and security of the citizen, there is provision made for his attending, with an undiverted mind, to the messages of salvation. In general prosperity there is a removal of the necessity of a constant and crushing care to live, which leaves no leisure for serious and inquiring thought on the higher wants and duties of our immortal nature. In the diffusion of intelligence and the enlargement of mind, there is furnished a fit preparation for the presentation of that gospel which the most penetrating intelligence cannot fully fathom, and which the greatest mind must be made greater that it may receive. In the rapid spread of population over all the country, and in the facilities for speedy and wide communication, are furnished means for the running to and fro upon the earth, of the messages and ministers of salvation, whereby the knowledge of God shall be increased. Oh, what do those ministers of Jesus mean, who would break up this great Union, and thus close the avenues to the extension of the gospel, which God's providence is opening? I read in the oracles of God of a coming day, when "the kingdoms of this earth shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Would that even now, all the freedom, the education, the wealth, the activity, the improvements of the age — would that they were all baptized in the love of God, and consecrated to His glory, and devoted to His service! But if, when the servants of God look longingly forward from



this evil time and cry out, "Lord how long? Why tarry the wheels of Thy chariot?" If the answer of God, by his providence be, "*Not yet, not yet,*" then should they, while they ply every instrumentality of gospel influence with new fervor, rejoice at the same time, to see the world's progress in liberty, intelligence, arts, prosperity, wealth, and power. I know that the time is coming when the world and all that it inherits, shall be laid at the feet of my Jehovah Jesus; and I would have the offering magnificent as man can make it. Let men speed the car, and stretch the whispering wire over every land and every sea, and build their cities and dig their gold. I know that the time is coming when they shall be given, with all their uses and all their powers, into the hands of Him "whose right it is to reign."

My friends and brethren, this Thanksgiving Day finds us all in the possession of many and inestimable blessings. Those of you, however, who are living only for time, heedless of eternity, have failed to receive the greatest of all God's gifts—the unspeakable gift of his own dear Son for your salvation. You will have no true cause for rejoicing—though you have for thanksgiving that the offer of salvation is not withdrawn—until you shall make your peace with God, through Jesus Christ, and receive all his providential gifts as included under the great gift of redeeming mercy.

For genial skies and abundant harvests; for a general prosperity without example in the history of the country; for the absence of suffering for the necessities of life, and



for the possession of the means of comfortable living among the laboring classes ; for the opportunity of affording employment to the thousands of suffering emigrants upon our shores ; for the increased efforts of the charitable, all over the land, to elevate the condition and relieve the wants of the native and the foreign poor ; for all these things we owe that devout thanksgiving which blends with praises for the past, new vows of service to God and our fellow creatures, for the future.

As a congregation, my brethren, we have great cause for thanksgiving. God has graciously given us prosperity and unity of feeling and affection, and has blessed us in our efforts to build a new house to His honor and glory. Let us prepare to enter into those courts with thanksgiving, and into that house with praise. Let us renew our consecration, and make our gratitude and devotion commensurate with our blessings.

As individuals you are greatly blessed. But little sickness, or sorrow, or bereavement, has invaded your households.

And remember that all your blessings have come to you and abide with you under the shelter of the Union of these States, in whose beating heart it is ours to live. Then let us join in spirit, with our brethren and countrymen all over the land, in praising God for these blessings, and in praying to Him that they never may be less.

Love the Union, for upon it hang the hopes of humanity and religion.

Cherish the Union. She is committed to our care. She was born in an hour of peril and of darkness. She was cradled on an open field of battle and of blood. Storms and tempests beat upon her unsheltered and homeless childhood. She grew up into benignant loveliness under no gentle nurture. For more than half a century she has been the guardian angel of the Republic. Cherish and love the UNION.



OUR COUNTRY AND OUR WASHINGTON.



# A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED ON

SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1852,

THE BIRTH-DAY OF WASHINGTON,

IN THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.



## II.

### D I S C O U R S E.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our Fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.—PSALM xliv. 1.

THIS Birth-day of WASHINGTON is a “Thanksgiving Day” to the people of this country, which it needs no proclamation of Governors to persuade them to remember and to keep. It is a day when the image of the venerable FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY rises before every heart, and when our national blessings—many of which he was a chosen instrument in securing—pass in review before every mind. I shall, therefore, give expression to the feelings which pervade all our land to-day, if I enumerate some of those blessings, and contemplate the character of him whose memory we revere as the great, the good, the wise Father of his Country. The subject is appropriate alike to the place and to the day.

1. The first national blessing which I mention is—*the character of the country which Providence has assigned to us.*

The country which we inhabit is such as has been allotted to no other modern nation. All the existing na-



tions of the world live in lands which have been the homes of numerous generations. It was our peculiar lot to be placed in a *new* land, where nature “wanton<sup>d</sup> as in her prime, and played at will her virgin fancies.” How different must be the influences brought to bear upon a people who occupy a country where they are surrounded with the monuments of the past, whose daily steps are over the tombs of many generations, who breathe the air in which are floating legendary traditions of early and romantic days, who see the centuries of their history notched upon olden tower and temple—how different must these influences be from those which surround a young nation, placed in a new land, and spoken to more by the impressive solemnities of nature, than by the works of man. It is unavoidable, that the external environments of a nation, the site it occupies, the monuments which daily meet its eye, the scenes in the midst of which its life is passed, should have a powerful influence in moulding that nation’s character. Old cities, venerable cathedrals, honored tombs, famous battle-fields, palaces of power, around which gather associations of ancestral pomp and glory—speak to the *national pride* of man, and fan his *local love*, and fashion his soul to a narrow and sectarian patriotism. But when educated and civilized man is removed from the influence of such associations, and, no longer moulded by daily contact with prescriptive institutions and local monuments, stands amid the sublimities and beauties of a new and wondrous land, his nature will spread into larger proportions, and his free mind act

with more vigor, directness, and success, than amid old and familiar scenes. Look at a good and thoughtful man in the days of the First James, or the First Charles, of England, who, sickened of the baseness and tyranny all around him, strives to reach *truth* upon the great questions of human rights and human governments. Think of the scenes, influences, and associations, in the midst of which he sits down to meditate on these high themes. He can not look at these questions under the clear and unclouded light of reason. Glaring colors, cross lights, distorting media, prevent a true conception of the great and unchanging rights of the governor and the governed. There are the associations, prejudices, and enthusiasms of his childhood and youth, which memory brings before him under the name of arguments and reasons; and their rosy light beautifies the enormities of the past. A thousand years of national history, trailing their glories and their glooms, throw such strong lights and shadows upon these truths, that their real character can not be discerned. A glittering throne casts over them its blinding glare. A splendid aristocracy adds its deceptive glow. A gorgeous church contributes its consecrating and glorifying flame. And with all these blending and blinding lights thrown over the subject of his contemplation, how can it seem to him other than *they make it* to appear? How can he well avoid, either giving his sanction to all claims of power, or of considering all government as an outrage and a wrong? But now take this man from amid these scenes, and place him in a *new* wide world; with a band of brothers, whom

a common necessity makes his equals ; with a Bible in his hand which tells him that “of one blood God made all nations that dwell on the face of the earth ;” amid ice-winds which would whistle as keenly on crowned and coroneted brows, as on the uncovered locks of the worn emigrant and pilgrim — place him there to study human rights and human governments, and he shall look at the question as it stands out under the clear and uncolored light of reason. Should he dare yield his assent to the old sophistries and lies which would prove the many to be made for the convenience of the few, all the stern and sublime scenes about him would utter their solemn confutations in his ear. The stones would cry out, that they grow no softer beneath a monarch’s tread, and press with equally relentless weight upon the corpses of the ignoble and the mighty. The stars in their courses would *fight* against the falsehood, and declare that they sparkle as brightly through the crevices of a cavern as on gilded palaces and spear-girt towers.

II. It is another of our distinguishing mercies *that our ancestry was of a homogeneous kind*—that the colonies which stretched along our shores, were not from various lands — because it is in consequence of this fact that a more complete *national unity* has been secured, in a country of unequaled vastness, than obtains in any other leading nation of the world. If large and influential colonies from Spain and Portugal had been established in our central positions, and connected with us in our struggles, and incorporated into our Confederacy, our

Union would have been a mosaic work, where poor and friable materials would have joined those of strength and beauty, whose unity a slight concussion might have destroyed. But there is now a more uniform type of national character all over this country, from Maine to Georgia, and from New York to San Francisco, than that which prevails in the little British Islands. How important this state of things is for national prosperity and permanence, we need not say. The people of these States had been colonists together, under the same remote imperial power. They had together resisted its arbitrary enactments. They had together sustained a long and exhausting war. They spoke the same language, and had the same literature. Their moral and intellectual training had been similar; the elements of their personal character were much the same. In short, they were distinctively *American* in character, and scarcely more like the English than like other nations. "Between the extreme North and the extreme South," says a distinguished statesman,\* "there was nothing more considerable to break its expressive unity, than such agreeable shades of character as might mark the remote descendants of the Roundhead and the Puritan on the one hand, and the Cavalier of the same country on the other; such shades of difference as might mark the varying moods of the same individual character, break up its dullness and tedious uniformity, and give it animation, strength, and beauty."

III. Another peculiarity of our national existence,

\* D. D. Barnard.

replete with blessings, is, that *we occupy a land every where rounded by distinct boundaries, which is of vast extent, and which includes every variety of soil, climate, and production.* Very great must be the influence of this state of things on our continued national unity and homogeneousness, and on our prosperity.

It is a condition of all the other great nations of the earth, that they are not merely *national*. They are *imperial*. They rule over distant colonies, or detached provinces, which are not assimilated to the parent State, but retain the peculiarities, customs, and spirit of their origin. Countries which hold colonies and dependent provinces, not only thereby lose compactness and national individuality; but can not be so free in their own home institutions, as they would be without them. The necessity of a vigorous exercise of power abroad, leads to its assumption and exercise at home. This holding on to colonies and dependencies is, most frequently, like the fastening of a dead body to a tree: they rack and tear the tree, and they continue to be dead. Now it is a peculiarity of our country that we do not, and never can, extend ourselves by colonies and dependencies. All our additions must be graftings, so that they shall increase the beauty and stateliness of the parent tree, and receive from it something of its own peculiar life. Those who join us must be, and are, assimilated rapidly to the body into which they are taken. All our hopes as a nation depend upon our unity; and this seems to be secured to us no less by our homogeneous ancestry than by the



physical features of the land in which we dwell. We are so large that anything which is near us and becomes our own must become a portion of ourselves—"as kindred drops are mingled into one." The two oceans isolate us—the chain of lakes, the Mississippi, and all the rivers and boundaries of the land, clasp us round, and hold us clamped, in indissoluble national unity.

IV. It is a distinctive and peculiar blessing of our land, that *the understanding and love of the true principles of free government*, and the ability to put them in practice, were so early established among us, without those *civil feuds* which are the awful price which other nations have been compelled to pay for the inestimable treasure, and which many, even at that price, have failed to gain.

The value of this blessing it would be difficult to over-estimate. No nation of the Old World has reached more just, enlightened, and free principles of government than our own mother land of Britain. But it is fearful to think at how slow a rate, and at what a fearful cost of individual suffering and national convulsion, the blessing has been obtained. The history of England, from the First James to the Revolution of 1688, is a record of the struggle of law with prerogative, of liberty with despotism, of right with might. How difficult, in the circumstances in which the champions of truth and righteousness were there placed, to fight their noble battle with pure and unembittered hearts. Such men, standing almost alone, seeing the upper classes subservient and



sycophantic, and the masses either submissive under all claims of power or given up to a spirit of license, which they called liberty; stung by oppression into madness, just when they most needed to be calm;—such men, the preachers, apostles, and martyrs of human rights in England, wrought a work and met a fate which entitle them to the homage and admiration of the world! And how slowly did their persecuted principles pervade the people! How were they insulted, branded, persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered, by despotic power! And when at length, under the intolerable despotism of Charles, the people awoke, and armed, and went forth to do battle, to the death, with their oppressors, how was the glory of that noble championship marred by evil passions, by fanatical excess, by examples of tyranny kindred to that against which they contended; and how was the progress of that struggle darkened by accumulated woes! and how was its triumph signalized by other despotisms in the name of freedom; and how was its temporary defeat made horrible by the fiendish brutality of a Jeffries; and disheartening to the hopes of freedom by the martyrdom of the lofty Russel, and the gifted Sydney!

The beautiful nymph LIBERTY had a harder destiny and wore a sadder brow in England than in our own free land. I see her born in the home of the scholar who bends over the stories of old renown. I see her pass her childhood and youth in musing and moody solitude. I discern her next, pale and passionate, hovering near the mid-

night conclave, where patriots are compelled to meet with the secrecy of conspirators. Then I behold her lingering, with flashing eye, around the halls of stormy legislation and debate. At length I see her on the battle-field, armed and radiant, apparent and acknowledged queen of the hosts whom she leads to victory. Thence I follow her to cabinets and closets of negotiation and debate, where her brow is knit with care, and her voice grows dominant and harsh; and not until after the chastening influences of years of imprisonment and oppression does she issue forth, purified and calm, and with a peaceful smile, prepared to exercise a blessed and benignant sway.

Look at some of the nations of the Old World. How mournful it is to see, by their past and recent history, that the battle of freedom is to be fought over and over again, because when it is won, her champions know not how to secure their triumph! The people of those lands can demolish the grim bastiles of tyranny, but can not erect the beautiful and proportioned temple of constitutional freedom. There are political Sampsons who can lay hold of the Dagon temples of despotic power, and shake them to the earth; but they themselves will perish in the ruins. It is melancholy to observe what crude notions and destructive theories of freedom prevail among the champions of popular rights in Europe. How seldom do they connect the idea of duties with the idea of rights! How often do they run the doctrine of political equality into wild theories of socialism and agrarianism! How little do they seem to comprehend that *obedience to law is*

*loyalty to liberty!* Hence it has so often occurred that the genius of freedom has, in Europe, worn the aspect of a fury, and gone forth with flaming torch and brandished sword, stirring up the multitude to mutiny and rage, to plunder and excess. It is the sad effect of long political enslavement, that its victims can with difficulty conceive of tolerant *law-enacting, law-enforcing, and law-abiding liberty!*

Now, in contrast with the toil, and blood, and suffering, at the expense of which the idea of regulated liberty was reached, and its reality secured, in our mother-land, and with the wild and mistaken notions of freedom which prevail among the champions of liberty in Europe, behold the idea and reality of freedom, as it exists with us. Liberty regulated by law—rights claimed from, because conceded to, others—the will of the people expressed through laws and constitutions—these are the fundamental privileges and principles of all our citizens. They grew with our colonial growth and strengthened with our strength, as we became a nation. We did not reach them after a long intestine struggle with our brethren and blood; but we had them in possession, and they nerved our arms, and knit our hearts, when we began the battle for independence. In this respect, as in many others, we enjoyed a peculiar and unequaled blessing. Freedom, which other nations shall secure only through long strife and revolutions, and which was established in our mother-land, only through many woes, came to us without a mark of sorrow on her brow, or the stain of blood upon her gar-

ments. The benignant genius of American liberty was not born in stealth and nurtured in seclusion. Her glad childhood and youth were passed on the sounding shores, in the bracing mountain airs, amid the forest solitudes, and by the wild rivers of our glorious land. She grew up in health, and bloom, and beauty ; and when our young nation became her champion, she spake to it words of soberness, and breathed into it a steady courage, a loving enthusiasm, and an indomitable will.

V. There is another feature of our political condition which is a peculiar blessing. I refer to *the Union of Sovereign States in one Nationality*. In this particular we are distinguished from all the republics of ancient and modern times. This has no precedent and no parallel. Familiarity with it may make us unconscious of its singular adaptation to a country so large and various as our own. A Republic so large, not divided into separate governments, with local legislatures, but subject, in all its minutest arrangements, to a central executive and legislative authority, could not long exist. The distant portions of the country would grow restive under an authority which could not understand its interests, and provide for all its minute and endless exigencies, and as its spirit of discontent and disobedience increased, the central authority would feel called upon to adopt more stringent measures of coercion and control. But observe what a provision for permanence and prosperity is furnished by the present union of various independent States under one government. It can exercise all the authority necessary for a

national administration, without the danger of undue centralization. It can leave each portion of the country to provide for its own wants, as a separate community, having its own peculiar characteristics, without allowing it to neutralize and nullify the authority of the central administration. The tastes, prejudices, and pride of each locality can be satisfied in that State legislation, which will provide such municipal regulations and State enactments as are consonant to the habits and desires of the people; while, at the same time, they shall experience the patriotic glow of feeling which becomes the citizens of a great and united nation. It is this which enables us, without detriment or danger to the integrity of the Republic, to incorporate States which are distant thousands of miles from the capital, and separated from other States by wide and dreary wildernesses. In nothing connected with our country is the providence of God to be more admired, than in that conjuncture of conflicting interests which forced the States, at the same time to continue their separate existence, and to unite in one nationality. It is this which, under God, has given us our prosperity and success. It is this which makes us respected and honored by the nations of the earth. It is on the continuance of this that our prosperity and glory in the future will depend. If, from the bright galaxy which constitutes our political system, one star should fall, would it not be as that star which is called in the book of Revelations, *wormwood*,\*

\*10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from Heaven, burning as it were a lamp; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11. And the name of the star is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.—Rev viii. 10, 11.



“ which fell upon the waters,” and of which it is said that “ a third part of the waters upon which it fell became wormwood ; and that many died of the waters because they were bitter ? ” Great, in proportion to the present blessings of this happy confederation, would be the curse, and the loss consequent upon its destruction.

VI. *The prosperous condition of the masses of the people in this country*, compared with that of every other nation of the earth, is one of our peculiar blessings. The high rate of wages given to labor in this country, is productive of great and salutary results. It is a great blessing, but not the greatest, that it furnishes the people with the comforts and even the elegancies of life. It is a still greater blessing that it enables the industrious and the thrifty poor to secure the advantages of education for themselves and their children. But beyond these obvious and immediate advantages, it is productive of extensive good. It is a permanent cause of great and increasing benefit to the State at large, and to that class in particular. In many old countries, where labor is abundant and scantily rewarded, it is the policy of Governments to nurse employments for the people. In consequence of this, there is little effort to introduce such improvements in agriculture, manufactures, and the arts, as shall save the labor of the human hand. That hand must be kept employed in useless and frivolous labor, lest being idle, it find “ some mischief still to do,”—lest it lay hold of palaces and thrones. Such a state of things is adverse to all progress. But in our country, where



labor is dear and not abundant, the opposite results ensue. Ingenuity is tasked to construct machines to save the labor of human hands, and to avoid the expense of their employment. Now observe the consequences of this one fact. It stimulates the ingenuity of men to construct machines which shall do cheap, rapid, and abundant work. It puts the powers of nature and of science in motion to add to the wealth, the convenience, and the happiness of man. It does not consign increasing numbers to frivolous drudgeries for small pay, in which they must continue ignorant and degraded. It takes out of the hands of ever-increasing numbers, the more crushing labor of the workshop, and allows them to step up to a higher range of work, in which they shall enjoy more leisure, emolument, and means of improvement, and be elevated in the scale of being. When, therefore, we see an American machine at the World's Fair, winning wide admiration, and gaining a medal, because it enables two men to do the work of twelve, we have cause for something more than national pride, because of a triumph over nations whose agriculture is many centuries older than our own. We have reason for gratitude. We see it to be not only a machine to gather in harvests, but a great engine of social amelioration and reform. It gathers in other harvests than those of corn. It brings in national intelligence, power, and plenty.

VII. It is another and peculiar blessing that in our country *religion is left entirely free*. Not only is there no union of Church and State, but absolute liberty of

conscience in matters pertaining to religion, is secured. No man lies under civil disabilities because of his religious or irreligious convictions. No restriction is laid upon the profession and diffusion of religious opinions, and no penalties are inflicted upon any thing that bears that name, unless under that name it becomes, in fact, a violation of the laws of the land. This is indeed a peculiar and a crowning mercy.

How emphatically and distinctly did our Saviour proclaim that his kingdom was not of this world! How careful he ever was, in his own person, to show that he did not assume to guide the civil authority in its functions, but acknowledged his own and his disciples' obligation to obey its laws. His was to be a spiritual kingdom, whose outward form, sacraments, rites, and worship, might subsist under every form of government, and be a detriment to none and a benefit to all, by the elevated morality which it should inculcate and exemplify. Yet, notwithstanding this explicit testimony of the master, how seldom has the Church been free from some injurious connection with the State! Either the Church has claimed lordship over kings and governments, or governments have claimed the right to regulate the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church, or proffered its hurtful help to pension its ministers and sustain its services; and the flattered and deluded Church has too often accepted the ruinous and paralyzing patronage.

Happily, with us the Church is entirely unconnected with the State. *Entirely unconnected*, we say, because the fact that the State sometimes makes use of the servi-

ces of the Ministers of God to give high sanction and solemnity to public acts, or to exert a purifying influence on those who do their work, no more implies a union of Church and State than the fact that she employs surgeons in her army and navy for the health and comfort of those in her employment, implies a union of the State with the medical fraternity. That exquisite patriotism which is alarmed at the prospect of the spiritual domination of the Church over the State, because a score of harmless Chaplains offer up prayers for the country and its rulers, ought to feel equal alarm lest the State fall under the dominion of the Doctors.

We may say, then, that the Church is *entirely* disconnected from the State. If she should control the State, she would lose her lofty character, and become more and more like a mere human government. If she should be controlled by the State, then she would fail to appeal to the souls of men with a divine and constraining authority and claim. If the State sends the Church to speak to men in reference to their religious interests, men will receive their words as *a message from the State*, rather than as a message from the Court of Heaven — from the King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the reason why the religion of the Saviour never can exert its full spiritual influence over the souls of men, if it be in alliance with human institutions. It must come to men as an authorized messenger from Heaven, which can consent to accept no modification of its message from human powers. It must appeal to man as an immortal. It must lay hold

of his conscience as a guilty creature of God, over whom retribution is impending, and before whom an eternal Heaven and an eternal hell lie waiting his own speedy determination. In an age like this, of activity, of enterprise, of crowded life, of strange events, absorbing novelties and rapid progress, which make existence a succession of gala days, religion must come clothed with awful dignity and authority, as *a messenger of God*, or it will speak in vain to the men of this generation, and of the coming generations. Only thus shall the Gospel speak, like its divine author, as never man spake, and with authority and power, to the souls of men.

VIII. And now, when we contemplate these blessings which we enjoy, and thank God for the fair field given us, and the propitious influences under which, as a nation, we have been trained, and ask to what *one man*, more than another, we have been indebted for our existence as a nation—before every mind there rises the venerable and majestic form of WASHINGTON! Every great movement and crisis in human affairs has its instrument, trained and qualified by God. The Reformation had its Luther in Germany, and its Cranmer in England. The Revolution of 1688, in England, had its William; Republicanism and Constitutional Liberty in America, had its WASHINGTON. He was qualified for his work, by a character whose elements were so kindly mixed as to have made him the acknowledged model, at once, of the patriot, the hero, the statesman, the gentleman, the Christian, and the sage. He was trained for the unequalled honors and the prodigious

toils and trials of his career, by a childhood and youth of hardy nurture and grave responsibility. It is needless for me to attempt to delineate his character, or to recall the incidents of his history. It rather becomes me, as the Minister of God, standing in this place and presence, to advert to that in his character—*his religious principle*—which was the secret of his strength, his wisdom, his greatness, and his success; to hold it up for imitation, and to show, by his example, that a wise administration of affairs, and a brave, unflinching adherence to duty, can result only from a practical, solemn, and realizing conviction of the presence and the government of that Almighty Being who doth according to his will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. This is the lesson which we would have the history of Washington impress upon us to-day.

1. The fixed and ruling conviction of the mind of Washington, which appears as well in his private as his public life, was, *that in the administration of affairs, he could expect true prosperity only so far as he put himself in harmony with the mind, and will, and purposes of God, in his government of the nations.* He who would conduct the affairs of war or State “without fault” and with success, must do it under the eye, and with respect to the government of Him who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, ruling over all. He must go *with* the tide of God’s government, and not *against* that tide. He must secure the blessing of the Almighty! Will he crush those whom he should protect? Will he invade those whom he should



defend? Will he, for an advantage, violate his plighted word? He can not thus advance the prosperity of a land! He may gather, in a glittering heap, the spoils of robbery and the gains of treachery and falsehood. He may set the material instrumentalities of wealth and prosperity at such rapid work, as that the nation may be stunned and bewildered by the motion and the din. But over him there is suspended a moral law of retribution, strong with the strength, and quick with the judgment of Jehovah, which, when He lets it loose, overrules and prostrates all the laws of nature and of society. And when that glittering heap of unrighteous wealth is piled up highest, this law shall strike it and scatter it to the winds; and when the clank of this godless machinery is loudest, and its power most Titan-like, this law shall smite it with a paralyzing curse, so that it shall pause powerless. The righteous ruler will rule wisely and prosperously, because he will *go with God*, and not *against God*.

2. This keeping of his eye on the hand of God, secured *a wise and successful action on the part of Washington, because it preserved him from the tyranny of those influences, from which usually spring the sorrows and the sins of nations.* From pride, ambition, unregulated passion, usually spring the faults and the crimes of warriors and of rulers. Now, if the ruler or statesman have his eye on God, and look for *His* guidance and blessing, he will have his moral nature so elevated as to be, for the most part, free from the dominion of evil passion and selfish feeling. It is mentioned of Daniel,



the prophet and statesman, that there was no "*error*," as well as no "*fault*" found in him. He not only did not commit crimes, but he was so free from *mistakes* that his enemies could get no advantage over him, on the ground of an impolitic and unwise administration. And from what do even the errors and mistakes of judgment spring, but from a false estimate of the worth and the true nature of things, and from some bias of wrong feeling, which prevents the right action of the reason? The purer a man's nature is—the more he is under the sway of right feeling, and principle, and desire—the better and wiser will all his practical judgments be. "God's word," saith the Psalmist, "giveth light and understanding to the simple." The wicked man is a *fool*, and the righteous man *wise*, not only in reference to the *ultimate consequences* of the course of each, but in reference to their *present* judgments and *estimates* of things. The man of God forms best judgments, because he lets reason, and not passion, speak; because he takes into account the sure action of moral laws—which the wicked usually omit—and because he is in the habit of postponing a present small good, for a future large one. In his comparative freedom, then, from the sway of evil passion and impure motive, and from his calm and less biased judgment, we may look to find little error or fault in the measures of the ruler whose eye is on God. It is the arrogant demand, the cutting taunt, the proud recrimination, which will goad a neighbor nation into war. Just, and righteous, and self-regulated Washingtons will

not utter them. It is greed, and pride, and luxury, which tempt rulers to oppress, and deceive, and defraud the people. Temperate and self-denying Washingtons will be free from the tyranny of those base passions. It is a short-sighted and material view of what constitutes the prosperity of States, which leads to errors and mistakes of policy which keep nations low. To be free from them in the conduct of affairs, the statesman must be free from the tyranny of vice, and pride, and passion.

3. This habit of reference to God and duty, will insure a wise administration of affairs, *because it greatly simplifies all questions, and gives the ruler and statesman a prodigious advantage in all his dealings with corrupt, designing, and intriguing men.* If a man be compelled to ask concerning any proposed measure or course of policy, will it wound enemies? will it conciliate friends? will it reward partisans? will it reconcile conflicting schemes, not of public good, but of selfish and sordid interest?—if a man asks these questions, and acts upon these considerations, he becomes involved in a labyrinth, where he can never see a step beyond him, and out of which he can never come into the clear light of day. If this evil spirit possess him, his soul will be forever in a tangled wilderness, walking in dry places. But if he ask the simple questions—Is it right? is it called for by justice? will it promote the public weal? then the question is divested of much perplexity. He is kept free from entangling and contradictory measures and engagements. His soul is not kicked about—the foot-

ball of a thousand filthy feet. There will be dignity, consistency, harmony, in his plans and measures. Such was the conduct and the character of Washington. When selfish and dishonest men gather about such a ruler, to offer base service for base hire, they will not know how to approach him. They will be awed into silence. They will be driven into obscurity. Their occupation will be gone. Let the statesman and the legislator hang up, in the temple of his heart, the tablets of God's law, written in golden capitals. Let him bind them for a sign upon his hand, and for frontlets between his eyes; let him write them upon the door-posts of his house and of his gates; let them be the avowed, and known, and only principles of his conduct, and he shall be always furnished with a ready rule for action; he will put to flight the tricks of diplomacy and the intrigues of low ambition; he will stand with a clear space about him, able to see where he is, and where he is going; he will march, as in triumphal progress, along the far-stretching avenue of time, lined and crowded with successive generations, amid the cheers and smiles of admiring nations! Such is the majestic march of WASHINGTON!

I have thought these views were suitable to this day and place, and I would leave these lessons here under a deep conviction that piety alone, which lays hold of the strength of God, can enable public men to stand true to themselves and their duty, in the midst of the fearful trials and temptations to which they are exposed. Say of one, that he has laid down certain principles of honor and

morality, to which he intends to abide through life — principles which have little or no direct reference, as held in his own mind, to God. Now he is exposed, in public life, more than in private, to the delusions of expediency. Will his principles always enable him to master the suggestions of expediency? But he is exposed to stronger tests and trials. A great bribe, a splendid prize, the very object of his hope is before him, which he may grasp, if he will, by treachery and wrong. Now watch that man! Is not the desire for this prize that which is *nearest* to his heart? Has he not kept the motives of interest closer before him than those of duty — proposing to call the latter to him when they shall be needed? Which is nearest, most familiar, most habitually present and prevalent with him? These vague principles, kept in the background, and having no eternal sanctions — shall they come forward now, and conquer? Would it not, in many cases, be calling spirits from the vasty deep? Having given his soul up, habitually, to interest, indulgence, and desire, must *they* not now, roused into more energy than ever, bear away the soul? Or take another case. A man is stung with the wrongs and insults of a rival. His ruin is plotted. His fair fame is blackened. But he can win a victory; he can recover his position; he can overthrow his rival, *if he will let his principles sleep the while*. Now what is there that is *near* him? What, from his previous moral training, will be most likely to stand before his soul with attractiveness and power? Will it not be his dear advantage, his sweet revenge, his masterly success?

Will not his soul be raised to a vehement pursuit of those near, attractive, and beckoning objects? Can such moral principles as he has adopted hold him now? Why should they? They are not present—they are not before him to tell of high joy if followed, and of keen woe if resisted. They are not before the soul as its august and venerated and recognized lords. What power, then, have they? They will not hold the soul to its moral purpose, like an anchor, sure and steadfast. They will be dragged in the wake of the soul, driven onward by the tempest of the passions; broken cables, without an anchor! Oh, there is awful power in the roused up evil passions of the human soul! Nothing is strong enough to master them but God—the truth and grace of God. This held firm to truth, to duty, to patriotism, to self-denying toil, to a self-consecration of himself and his fame, amid obloquy, intrigue, and base persecution, the great, the pure, the majestic, the unselfish soul of WASHINGTON!

We have contemplated to-day the unequalled blessings which as a nation we enjoy. For these let us render to God our earnest praises. We have seen that in which lay the strength and glory of the venerable Father of his Country. In that let us imitate his example. A beautiful and matchless example it is of private and of public virtue. It rises and towers aloft and alone on the field of history, majestic, proportioned, and pure! His fame is well symbolized by the monument which is rising near us, to commemorate his services and our everlasting gratitude. It is, like that monument, deep and strong in its founda-

tions, simple in its form, pure in its material, massive in its structure, and *has but the beginning of the elevation which it is destined to attain!* It shall rise higher and higher, as the ages pass along; and should the sun of this Republic ever set, “the last rays of its departing glory shall linger and play upon its summit.”\*

\*Daniel Webster.





Distinguishing National Blessings.



A THANKSGIVING SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

TRINITY CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

NOVEMBER 23, 1853.



### III.

#### DISCOURSE.

Hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, by wonders and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all the Lord your God did for you?—DEUT. iv. 34.

WE meet, to-day, to thank God for our *national* blessings. As we look at the condition of the other nations of the earth, at this time, and hear of wars and rumors of wars, and think of the individual peace and happiness that will be trodden down in the march of the great events, to which God's word of command, FORWARD, has already sounded, we may well prostrate ourselves in gratitude before the God of nations, and pour out our hearts to him in warm "*Thanksgiving*."

An enumeration of the points in which we differ from other civilized and Christian States is almost identical with a record of our greatest and most peculiar advantages and blessings. Such, at least, they are in the regard of him who adopts the principles of our Fathers in estimating national blessings. If the true end and worth of life be to develop our mental, moral, and spiritual nature; to insure the greatest happiness of the greatest number; to have the freedom, the opportunity, and the means to cultivate

and enjoy the peculiar gifts which God has bestowed upon individual souls; to possess every God-given right, and to have free scope for the discharge of every God-imposed obligation; then are the points on which we *differ* from other nations, our peculiar and highest blessings. If that state of things which produces *for the whole*, the highest degree of prosperity, happiness, culture, and moral elevation, be the best, then without doubt ours is the most favored nation of the earth.

1. We differ from all the other nations of the earth *in the character of our habitation*. The best part of a Continent, it includes within its boundaries every variety of soil, climate, and productions. There is, therefore, a stimulus to industry, and a field for enterprise, and an opportunity for the development of every inventive faculty, and for the exercise of every peculiar gift, such as was never before furnished to a nation. Over this vast field all can range at will. Within it all can cultivate unmolested the arts of peace. We need not that half of our population should stand armed and idle on our boundary lines to protect the other half that labor. On the two sides we are clasped in the friendly arms of our only neighbors, the two great Oceans. On other sides mighty lakes, long rivers and desert solitudes, are our walls and defenses, and within them there is a population that could well dispense with them, if they were not there. An armed force which is but a tenth of that which is considered necessary for the police of a single capital of Europe, suffices for a country larger than several of their great

kingdoms combined. A country so vast, varied, well-bounded, withdrawn, and secure from hostile neighbors, gives to its population free scope for the exercise of all its energies. All its forces can be at work at once. If in such a country genius, invention, and industry, be fostered and not repressed, and if equal privileges be secured to all its population, it is manifest that every advantage is possessed to secure the widest possible diffusion of the blessings of plenty, of education, and of moral and religious culture. Surely to the God that fixes the bounds of its habitation for every nation, do we owe devout Thanksgiving for the peculiar mercy with which he has distinguished us in this respect. "Hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord our God did for us?"

2. We differ from all the other nations of the earth *in the history to which we look back*; and here our difference is our advantage. When men would learn *truth, right and duty*, it is important that they should occupy a point of view from which they can rightly judge of these great questions. In the decision of them they will be influenced by the history upon which they look back, and by which they have been moulded. The inhabitants of most other states look back upon a history in which they have always occupied the position of the *governed*. Their traditions, their literature, their associations, their home affections,



and all the nameless influences which go to make up *love of country*, tend to make one class conclude that it is the invariable arrangement and the explicit law of God that *one*, or a select *few*, should govern, and that the many should submit to their authority. Another class, smarting under oppression and injustice, or shut up from the free exercise of the powers that God has bestowed upon them, or precluded from discharging the duties which God has laid upon them, come to the conclusion that to be *governed at all* is an intolerable outrage. But he who looks back into our history, studies these questions apart from the influences, traditions, and environments of the distant past. They are not seen through the mists of ages. They are taken out of palaces and cathedrals, where false lights and shadows are thrown upon them, and put under the light of the open day. He can bring to bear upon them the full and unclouded beams of reason and revelation. No present and unjust authority terrifies him into the admission that it is legitimate and just; and no hot resentments against felt tyranny hurry him into the conclusion that all government is a usurpation. He possesses a great advantage for judging the great questions of truth and justice, right and duty. When he studies these questions in the light of our history, he can not but conclude that it is right that men should *be governed*; but that they should be governed—not *let loose*, but GOVERNED—BY THEMSELVES.

3. Nor do we differ less in our *government* than we do in our history and habitation from the other nations of the

earth. And surely this, our difference, is also our signal blessing! "Mark then Judges and Lawgivers," says the majestic Milton, "and ye whose office it is to be our teachers, for I will utter now a doctrine, if never any other, though neglected or not understood, yet of great and powerful importance to the government of mankind. He who would wisely restrain the reasonable soul of man within due bounds, must first himself know perfectly how far the territory and dominion extends of true and honest liberty. As little must he offer to bind that which God hath loosened as loosen that which He hath bound." Golden words — "*as little must he offer to bind that which God hath loosened, as loose that which God hath bound.*" This is "true and honest liberty."

Now we believe that this definition of the great Republican has never been so nearly realized as in our free, representative, confederated, self-government. We believe that our fathers knew the "just extent of the territory and dominion of a true and honest liberty." It was the "largest extent, the highest degree, the widest enjoyment, the securest possession of liberty which is compatible with that amount of compulsory restraint which the maintenance of the body politic imperatively requires."\* It has such extent as to give equal rights to all citizens, and to confer exclusive privileges upon none. It has such extent as to secure to each citizen the rights of conscience in matters of religion; and the full and free exercise of his faculties in any department of study or of labor to which

\*Winthrop, p. 153.

he may choose to devote himself. But it does not extend so far as to encroach upon the rights and liberties of others, or to violate the laws by which they are secured. It is limited within *a government*; though that government be a free and self-government. Surely under such a government—which is but organized freedom—man has a fair field to show what he can become. If in such a land and with such a history and under such a government as ours, with a free Bible and every agency of moral, mental and spiritual improvement, our progress be not upward in all that dignifies and adorns humanity, it will be demonstrated that the fault is not in our circumstances, but in ourselves!

4. We differ not only in the form of our government, the principles upon which it is constructed, the rights which it secures and the liberty it allows, *but we differ in the mode in which our government is administered.* In that difference is found one of our choicest blessings. In the great States of Continental Europe, it is necessary that an army, sufficient to overawe the population at home and repel all foreign foes, shall be maintained. Nothing more arrests and offends the eye of an American Citizen in those lands, than this ubiquitous soldiery, this armed police, which everywhere appears, swarming in every town and city, and deforming every rural scene and every mountain solitude. He perceives in it the evidence that the people, instead of being relied upon to exercise rational *self-control*, are *controlled* by an over-awing power. In the vast horde of idle consumers and in the enormous splendor of Kings, Nobles and Prelates,

he sees a visible explanation of the great poverty, the frequent wretchedness, the abject beggary, and the general low level of thinking and living, which meets him at every step. Hence crushing taxes. Hence woman turned into a field laborer and drudge. Hence the muttered execrations that meet his ear. Hence hatred to tyrants hardening into a system of robber violence, or of visionary Socialism; and contempt for Priests passing into blasphemy against God. Now, when in contrast to this we turn to the administration of our free government we *feel* rather than *see* the agency by which it is accomplished. *Government* is here, but it is not visible in a splendid throne and a gorgeous aristocracy. The *power* of government is not absent, but it is not heard in the tramp of armed battalions, and does not flash from the points of bayonets and spears. Checks and chains are not wanting; but no visible arm supplies the one, and no terrifying clank is heard from the other. When the astonished foreigner sees our congregated thousands without bands of soldiers to keep them quiet, and asks —“Where are the Governors of these people?”— Our proud answer is,—pointing to *themselves* —“There they are! They are governing themselves!” When men are governed by others, then the power over them must be visible, organized, splendid, and overawing, if it is to be efficient. When men govern themselves then simplicity distinguishes their agents and a becoming economy regulates their affairs. To one who has seen the slim pomp of small Dukes and poor Princes, or the more gorgeous splendors of Regal and Imperial power, in connection

with their effects on the masses of the people, there is a moral sublimity in the grave and decent dignity of our chief magistracy, and in the unseen, silent and efficient administration of authority.

5. But we differ from almost all other Christian States in our *social* no less than in our *civil* condition. The distinction of fixed ranks and jealously guarded classes cannot here exist. We count this one of our greatest blessings. It enters largely into the happiness and comfort of daily life. Civil wrongs are frequent blows from the rod of a master which make the soul smart and bleed; but social wrongs are constant fetters on the soul, which eat into it and inflame it hour by hour. In vain do you give man civil freedom, if you subject him to social tyranny, and to exclusion from classes which he is fitted to enjoy and to adorn. The enjoyment of the one makes him feel more bitterly and resentfully the injustice of withholding from him the other. The aristocratic distinctions of society in continental Europe, and even in England, are surely not best fitted for the right development of man, and for the promotion of the greatest welfare and happiness of the greatest number. It is a poor and pitiful spirit that prevents those who are equals in education, refinement, and character, from enjoying the mutual privilege of equal converse. It is a poor and pitiful spirit which leads one man, or set of men, to look down upon another with arrogance and contempt, or insulting condescension, or up to another man or set of men, with servility and envy. These distinctions do not prevail, and this

spirit cannot have place in our land. It is a maxim with every class that every other class is entitled to be treated with courtesy, consideration and respect. From the ranks of the highly educated and refined, none who are fitted to belong to them are excluded. Now I contend that, though this state of society sometimes brings about associations which shock the nerves of the fastidious, it is the most noble and *advanced* state of society; it is in itself just and right; it conforms to the spirit of Christianity; it ministers to the happiness, and calls out the genial affections, and fosters the generous and pure sensibilities of the human heart. The opposite spirit in social life chills the sensibilities, narrows the affections, belittles the general character, and darts from rank to rank the poisoned arrows of reciprocal envy, jealousy, contempt, and hatred; and plants daggers in a thousand hearts. It is of liberty in this large sense, which includes freedom from *social* as well as *civil* wrongs, that it may be the most truly and emphatically declared:

"Tis liberty alone that gives the flower  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,  
And we are weeds without it. All constraint  
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
Is evil; hurts the faculties; impedes  
Their progress in a road of science,  
Blinds the eyesight of discovery, and begets  
In those who suffer it a sordid mind;  
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
To be the tenant of man's noble form."

6. *But there is a difference between us and some of the nations of Europe, in which the advantages would seem at*



*first, to be on their side. We refer to their acknowledged superiority in the fine arts, and in the possession of the best master pieces of the selectest geniuses of the world.* So much is written, said and sung of the refining and elevating influence of Art, that the deficiency of our country in this respect might seem to be the absence of one of the great civilizers and purifiers of society. But even here when we come to examine the subject apart from the mere enthusiasm for art, the sentiment, and the traditional transmitted raptures with which it has been invested, we shall find, I think, nothing to lament.

As illustrations of the spirit of the age in which they were wrought, the remains of *ancient art* in the cabinets of Europe, and especially in the Vatican, are of the greatest interest to the historian and student of human nature. As breathing embodiments of some of the unchanging feelings and affections of the human heart, which are the same in every age and clime, they are matchless and enchanting. In the Hercules Farnese you may still see the brute power, and in the dying Gladiator the heartless cruelty, and in unnumbered bronzes and marbles the awful and shameless licentiousness of Rome. It is the history of the social state and spirit of Rome fixed in the marble and the bronze. Human love still starts and is suffused with tremulous rapture, as it comes into the presence, and sees itself embodied and expressed in the form of some tender Psyche; and human pride and scorn feel ennobled as they gaze upon themselves in the lofty defiance and magnificent disdain of the Apollo Belvidere. Thus is the

imagination and passion of those nations perpetuated in their immortal symbols. The art of *modern Europe* is no less significant of the age and character from which it sprung, nor is it altogether wanting in the expression of those spiritual and eternal realities which Christianity has given to man as his most precious heritage. If one desires to see *any* visible representation of the Holy Virgin and the wondrous child Jesus, and can have his emotions of genuine and spiritual awe and gratitude deepened by the spectacle, then his wants can not crave, his imagination can not conceive, his Protestantism can not suggest, the world will probably never furnish a more fit and impressive presentation of them, than that Madonna of Raphael at Dresden, before which successive generations have stood in silent awe. If one desires to know how the emotions of penitence and agony show themselves on human features and in human forms, he may see the one in some disheveled Magdalen of Guido; and the other, partly appalled and partly disgusted, he may see in those terrific forms, expressive more of physical than of mental torture, which came forth from the stern and gloomy genius of Michael Angelo, and were fixed in fresco on the walls of the Sistine Chapel. In summing up their historical, moral, and religious worth, we say all that can be justly said of these works of art, when we declare that they are valuable as illustrating the character and history of the age in which they are wrought; that they give some beautiful and matchless expressions of our common humanity; and that they truthfully portray some of the facts and the

spiritual realities of our common Christianity. So much as this, the most prejudiced observer must admit.

But that we as a nation are to lament the absence of these or kindred treasures of Art, we are not prepared to grant. What influence on the whole, do these works of Art, and the culture of Art as now carried on in Europe, have upon national and individual character? Who will venture to say, however much he may talk in general of the refining and elevating influence of Art, that they *have had* a refining and elevating influence on the present population of the continent? Who, seeing their effects in their chosen seats, would desire to have them as part of the moulding powers and influences of our Republic? While we have shown their all of good, we have said nothing of their corrupting and debasing influences. They express and foster a state of society and feeling with which we are happily unacquainted. The very place they occupy in the public mind is itself an evil. No serious and earnest nation, which was bent on being that which became a great and Christian state, could give such prominence to Art as it occupies on its chosen theatres. And then how has it educated the multitudes? Look at the population of Italy who are born and live and breathe in the atmosphere, and are surrounded by the monuments of Art, and let them reply! It can do little but debase and corrupt; because it is the offspring of debasement and corruption. It is the grand minister of superstition and of lust. There is very little there to lift man's nature higher. There is very much to drag it down. How much is there

in all those long miles of corridors and acres of canvas which has any tendency to ennoble, purify and spiritualize the soul of man? Of what are they composed? There Heathenism disentombed, in the form of art, has fixed all its gross and evil ideas and habits, so foreign from all that purifies and ennobles the human heart, and there its idolatry, its fierce passions, its horrid lust, are perpetuated in the midst of a Christianity which is but Heathenism baptized. There the pictured history records the triumphs of civil and spiritual despotism; for they were painted to order for Popes and Kings. There by the side of saints whose rapture is grimace, and of sacred stories whose simple majesty is tricked off and rendered ridiculous by the puerilities of tradition, of lying and disgusting legends of roasted St. Lawrences and pierced St. Sebastians, are hung glowing delineations of beauty of passion and of lust, which it makes the cheek of modesty tingle only to know are there. What the better can any one be for gazing all his life on scenes like these? How can he fail to be the worse? But when we look for the true ministry of art, we find but little of it amidst its overwhelming influences in favor of superstition and of licentiousness. In all those sweet scenes of nature which recall childhood and suggest Heaven; in those beautiful delineations of affection which recall at a glance a whole history and heart; in those brave deeds of self-denial which brace the heart for duty and endurance; in those truthful delineations of scripture history which, not distorted into grimace, nor degraded into childishness by legendary additions, would

be God's own Bible presented through the senses to the conscience and the heart, and would unite all that is most beautiful, touching, or terrifying in human nature, with all that is most solemn, affecting and delightful in our spiritual history and in our immortality; in those sweet angel faces and those glimpses of Heaven, which pure children and child-like souls dream of, and which soften sterner souls by their transforming gentleness;—in all this range of pure and elevated art, there is so little compared with that which gratifies mere taste, or ministers to mere sensuality, that the resultant of its combined influences is, in my judgment, far more for evil than for good. The refining and elevating influence of European art? I do not believe in it! I believe that it has had, on the minds of many of our own countrymen, a most corrupting and disastrous effect! I believe that the single figure of Washington, now growing into form and waking into life, in the studio of Crawford at Rome, is destined to exert a more ennobling influence on the mind of man, than all the mob of naked Venuses and distorted saints, and theatrical angels and agonizing wrestlers, in the cabinets of Europe!

No, let us not envy or desire the art of Europe. Our own national art will appear in good time. Art is valuable and elevating only as it represents, and reproduces, and perpetuates, the beautiful, the true, the pure, the grand realities of history and of life. Let us *be* that which is great and noble and this *being* will start into manifested life in the canvas, the marble, and the bronze! In the meantime let us remember that the *thing* is better



than its best representation. The *reality* which the *soul* can see, is grander than the *shadow* on which the *eye* may rest. Let all things that are lovely and of good report prevail among us; let the fair realities of pure and beautiful deeds and affections be our daily possession, and grace our daily life; and then, arrested and immortalized in imperishable forms, let them continue to cheer and elevate successive generations!

7. We differ from most of the other nations in the fact that with us *religion is entirely free and disconnected from the State*. It is our crowning mercy that we are a Protestant nation, and not under the dominion of the Church of Rome, whose tyranny swallows up at once all the dearest spiritual, civil, and social rights of man. I am aware that there is a sort of public sentiment which demands that the Church of Rome should be spoken of in gentle and dainty and measured terms. I can make no concession to that sentiment. After having had the testimony of all history confirmed by what my own eyes have seen, I were a traitor to every instinct of justice, every sentiment of pity for my fellow man, every feeling of loyalty and love to my God and Saviour, if my whole nature did not rise up in abhorrence and indignation, at the most awful domination that ever crushed the soul of man into servility, baseness and superstition. Every year shows more and more the evil and the woe which it produces. Where it is enthroned, and men are forbidden by the most fearful penalties to hold any thoughts but what she teaches, how dreadful is the havoc which is made of all that is



precious in the life and soul of man! Those of her victims who pine and die in prisons, because they read and love the word of God, demand our sympathy. But it is not those who claim our profoundest pity. These hold converse with consoling truth, and with them dwells the Comforter. They whose souls are darkened by submission or maddened and misled by hatred — these call for our deepest sorrow. Her willing victims are robbed of the most precious truths of God. Instead of the pure religion of Jesus which transforms nature, they receive a corrupt superstition which leaves to unchanged nature all its *old powers* of evil, and often gives it others that are new. Out of other hearts her heavy hand crushes all belief. “In the stagnant marshes of corrupt Christianity,” says Robert Hall, “Infidelity has been bred.” And then brooding in silence on their wrongs, or kindling each others’ passions and resentments by stealthy converse and secret combinations, they erroneously conclude that the source of all evil lies without themselves and not within, and that it is to be found in the church, and in political and social organizations, which are under her sway. Thus they grope like blind Sampson, among the pillars of the vast grim structures of tyranny that are over them, ready in their anger and despair to perish, so that they may achieve a dear revenge. Oh it is because of the havoc which Rome makes *in the souls* of men, whether they be subdued into acquiescence or stung into revolt, that our nature rises in abhorrence against her cruel sway. Where she prevails most, the grossest immorality and darkest despotism pre-

vail. Witness Rome, Naples, and Madrid! Those who submit to her are in darkness. Those who revolt from her can not find the light. Where they break away from the tyranny of Priests and Kings, they fall under the despotism of their own passions, and are again made slaves. Rome is a school in which truth and right are not taught; and therefore, they who break away from her are not prepared for freedom, for

"True liberty  
Always with right reason dwells  
Twin'd, and hath from her no dividual being."

Why is it that even now when there is a probability of universal war in Europe, in the midst of which many Despotisms would fall and the people again become the masters — why is it that the friends of freedom and of man *tremble* more than *hope* in view of this seemingly desirable result? Ah! they know that Rome has demoralized their populations! They remember the teachings of '48! They remember how those who were mighty to demolish were impotent to construct! They remember how ruffianism and brutality tore away the fair and shrinking form of freedom from the arms of patriotism, and how amid their drunken orgies, they were surprised and again overrun by the emissaries of despotism. Dreadful is that dominion over the souls of men, acquiescence in which is baseness, and revolt against which is too often but wild anger, lawless passion, and brute revenge!

Is it not then true that it is our richest national blessing that we were not under the power or the predomina-

ting influence of the church of Rome ? Is it not this day the fit theme of warm thanksgivings that it was not under such influence that our fathers and ourselves were nurtured ? Surely if we love our great and glorious land ; if we cherish our short but kindling history ; if we value our free and frugal government ; if our social equality is dear to us ; if we rejoice rather than regret that we are not surrounded by the monuments and productions of art which fix in the yielding minds of youth the lessons of tyranny and the images of pollution — then must it be the chief matter of our Thanksgiving that our national life was nurtured not under a Romish, but under a Protestant Christianity ; for otherwise these vast blessings had not been ours.

I have spoken at large of our national blessings. I had purposed to have spoken also of our national dangers and duties. Time, however, will not allow. Our dangers are great, many, and increasing. They arise mainly from two great sources — from the misuse and abuse of our signal mercies, and from the rapid infusion of uncongenial elements into our system. Our unparalleled national blessings and advantages are abused by us to purposes of evil. Our freedom, which rightly considered is but another name for righteous law, is the occasion of our spirit of individual willfulness, insubordination and contempt of law. Our silly and sinful luxury is the misuse of unmatched prosperity. Our growing commercial dishonesty and reckless gambling are the answers to the clamorous calls of luxury, of the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Our proud

self-reliance and forgetfulness of God as the Ruler of the world, come from those marvellous triumphs of science and of art, by which man harnessing the power of nature to the car of progress, and taking his seat within it, crowned and robed, proclaims himself lord of this lower world. The growing irreligion, lawlessness, ruffianism and infidelity which these causes rapidly engender, are fearfully augmented by the coming in upon us, too rapidly to be at once assimilated and taken up into the body politic, of foreign populations with whom the ideal of freedom is that of licentiousness, and who are unprepared for the duties and do not comprehend the self-restraining liberty of freemen. All that could be said upon this subject would be but an amplification of the wise and mighty words of Burke, which contain the whole philosophy of freedom, and indicate at once our danger and our duty :

“Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites ; in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity ; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their presumption ; in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and *the less of it there is within, the more there must be without*. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intem-

perate minds can not be free. *Their passions forge their fetters.*”

The *great* and *permanent* blessing of our country have been presented to your minds. Those which crown the *present year* call for special praise.

Peace and plenty are within our borders. The fearful pestilence which ravaged some portions of our country is stayed. Commerce, agriculture and the arts flourish.

Within the successively narrower circles of your city, your church, your homes, many blessings cluster.

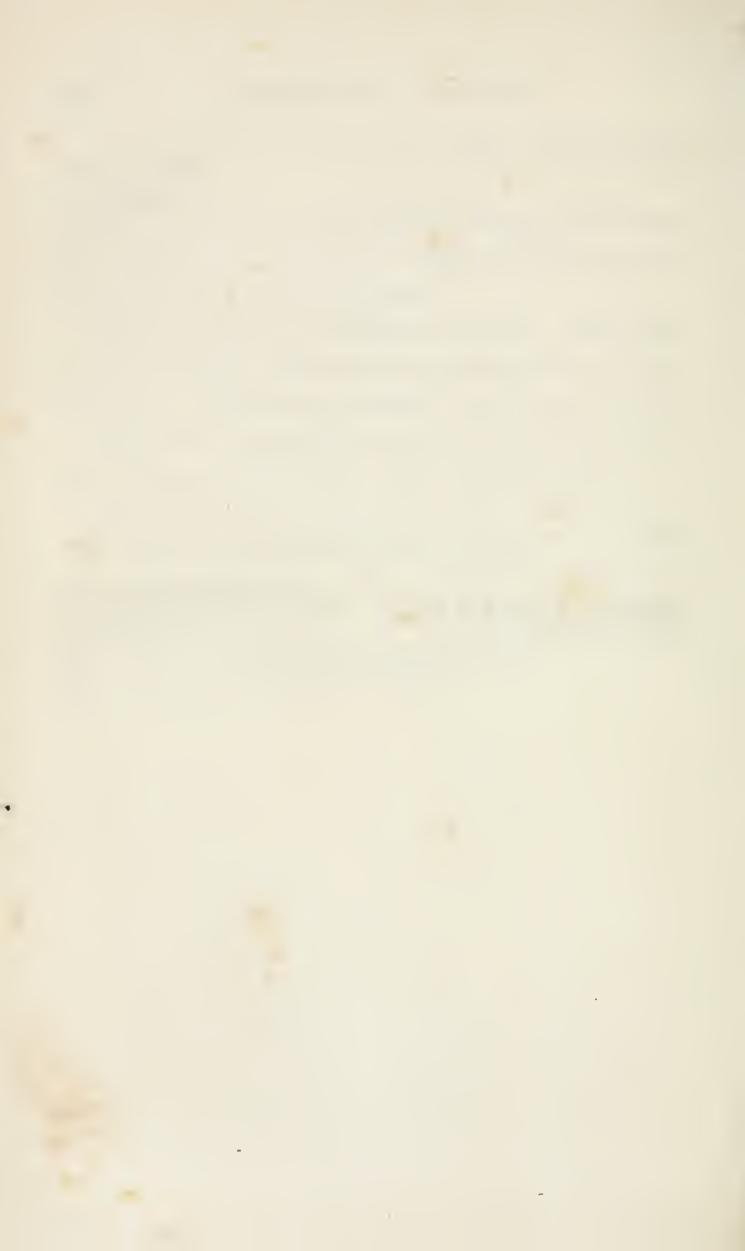
As you go to your homes, my friends, and sit down to the feast of family affection, tell your own hearts, and tell your children, how much a Christian citizen of this Republic who lives at this day has to thank God for ; and how little reason he has to envy the situation of men of other lands, or of past generations.

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MISCELLANEOUS DISCOURSES.

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# The Relation of Christianity to the State.



# I.

## D I S C O U R S E .

On the recurrence of every new election for chaplains to Congress, opposition is made to it on the ground that Congress has no power under the constitution to elect them. This sentiment prevails, to some extent, throughout the country. I propose to show that it is unfounded, and that the appointment of chaplains in Congress, and in the army and navy, is in accordance with the true principles of republican and representative government. I expect to prove that ours is a Christian State, and that though there is no union of Church and State, the Christian religion has ever been recognized as the religion of the country by the government; and that the appointment and employment of chaplains in the public service and in Congress are *demand*ed by loyalty to the principles of true democracy.

It is, indeed, one of our choicest national blessings, that with us there is no union of Church and State. The arguments by which that union has been vindicated, and urged as alike the duty and the right of both Church and State, appear feeble to the citizens of a republic in which such union has always been repudiated. It is rejected at

once by their hereditary instincts, and by the fundamental principles of their political and religious creeds. As citizens, they interpose the Declaration of Independence and the constitution; and as Christians, the *dictum* of the Saviour, that "His kingdom was not of this world;" and with these they solemnly forbid the unholy espousals.

This first principle in the mind of an American citizen is held with sufficient tenacity and zeal. It is universally comprehended, vindicated, and loved. But there does not appear to be an equally intelligent perception of what *should be*, and what in fact *are* in this country, the mutual relations of the Church and State. On this subject there is much confusion, indecision, and error in the public mind. For want of clear and fixed opinions on this subject, some persons are needlessly alarmed at fancied advances towards a union of Church and State; and others are occasionally tempted, by zeal for the interests of the Church, to propose or vindicate measures which justly excite jealousy and alarm.

It would be well for us, as citizens and Christians, that we might be prepared for all our duties in both relations, if we could reach definite conclusions upon this subject. To do so, we must have a clear idea of what constitutes a union of Church and State, and an equally clear idea of their actual relation to each other in this country.

Three modes by which the Church may be united to the State have been described by Justice Story. A government may endow or aid any particular religion, as the Christian or Mohammedan, and leave all persons free to

profess the faith and exercise the worship of others. Or it may create an establishment for propagating and supporting a *particular church*, and leave all others free. Or it may create an establishment for sustaining a particular church, and exclude the members of all other churches from its bounty, and from civil offices, honors, and emoluments.

If these definitions are comprehensive and complete—as they seem to be—then there is no *union* of Church and State, in theory or in fact, in the United States. The constitution declares “that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States;” and that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

It will aid us, in our effort to learn the truth upon this subject, to recur to the situation of the colonies in respect to religion at the period of the revolution; and then to notice the changes that have been effected by that great event.

In most of the colonies of this country we find the Christian Church to have been established in some of its forms—either by the fundamental charter given by the parent government, or by its own legislation; and in almost all cases it was established with more or less of exclusiveness, and of penalty and prohibition directed against other forms of worship. In Rhode Island, absolute liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were proclaimed among the fundamental laws of the colony.



In Maryland, full toleration was allowed. But in the other colonies, for a longer or shorter period, the established religion cast out or oppressed other forms of faith and worship; favored and wedded Sarah drove hated and rejected Hagar into the wilderness. In Virginia, the church of England was early established, its doctrines and discipline enforced, and all non-conformists were compelled to leave the colony. It was not until 1699, that toleration was proclaimed. In Massachusetts, none but church members were admitted as freemen. Penalties pronounced by the church were inflicted by the civil power. Heresies were punished by fines, banishment, and even death. In Connecticut, regulations similar to those in Massachusetts prevailed. There was no toleration; churches could not be established without the permission of the general assembly. Persecution for religion continued until the reign of William and Mary. In New York, the Romish religion was not tolerated, and Romish priests were condemned to banishment, and in some cases to perpetual imprisonment. Immediately previous to the revolution, although religion continued to be established in most of the colonies, yet toleration was either expressly provided or practically allowed.

When the colonies formed a confederation, it was a league of *Christian States*. They were Christian men who combined to achieve civil independence. In all the colonies from which they came Christianity was the hereditary, established, and prevalent religion. In each of them, it is true, Christianity, in some one of its forms of

faith and organization, enjoyed more favor and obtained more prevalence than in others; but it was Christianity, in some one or more of its sects, which prevailed in all. It was men who believed the Bible, and the God of the Bible, who declared their purpose to be free men. Their conduct in reference to Christianity was precisely that which, as honest men, and men of sense, we should expect it to have been. What was it?

They were defrauded of civil rights, as they alleged, by the mother country. They met and said, "Let us disown her allegiance; let us defy her power; let us combine to win independence." Upon this daring enterprise they embarked. Now, it is not to be supposed that a league of States composed of citizens whose religion was Christianity, and who consequently believed in the providence of God, and in their dependence upon Him for success, should enter upon this great work by dropping from their character and conduct all their religious feelings and convictions. Nor did they. They acted at once, spontaneously and harmoniously, as if they possessed *a common Christianity*. They appealed to the God of the Bible. Statesmen called upon ministers and people to pray and trust to the Christian's God for success. Military commanders reminded the soldiers that the battle is the Lord's. Congress appointed and supported chaplains, ministers of the Christian faith, to accompany its armies. It recommended the first English edition of the Bible that was published in this country. It proclaimed days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to God. It acknowledged and

observed a Christian Sabbath. In its public documents, its proclamations, and its measures, the confederation recognized itself, and proclaimed itself, and acted itself out, as a Christian league. The sectarianism of their Christianity dropped from it, and left it, in its great principles, their common heritage.

These combined Christian States fought, triumphed, and became independent of Great Britain. Then those who, bound up in thirteen different bodies politic, had formed a confederation, agreed that, while their State organizations should remain for local purposes, and with certain powers, they would unite as one people, that they might also form a general government for other purposes and with other powers. Such a government they formed. The two systems worked together like a great machine which is so constructed that, as a whole, it accomplishes *one great purpose*, and that its separate portions, which minister to that one principal effect, at the same time constitute smaller systems, and work out other results. When this state of things is reached, we find the separate States and the general government speaking and acting as if they possessed a common Christianity. The same recognition of the Christian religion as the religion of the nation, was made by the federal government as by the confederation. The God of the Bible was recognized, and his aid invoked by our statesmen in council, and by the leaders of our armies returning from victorious fields. The sacredness of the Christian Sabbath was recognized by the regulations and the example of the government. Chaplains

for Congress, and for the army and navy, were appointed and supported. Public thanksgivings to God were proclaimed. Thus, it is seen that after our constitution was adopted, precisely as before, the government recognized itself as Christian, and as the agent of a Christian people.

Now, let us inquire precisely what *was involved* in this distinct recognition, and see whether there was, or has ever been, a practical violation of the principles of the constitution. I think we shall find that the government, in the course which she has pursued in reference to Christianity, has acted in perfect consistency with, and in beautiful exemplification of those fundamental principles of republican government, which were enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, and enshrined in the articles of the federal Union. The following statement includes all that she has done and left undone upon this subject :

The people of the United States are a *Christian people*. This they *are*, and, by an immense majority, *were* at the time of the adoption of the constitution. In the formation of the general government, admonished by history, they determined that they would not create an establishment of any one Christian denomination, nor extend equal aid and support to the churches and ministers of all denominations ; nor employ, nor pay, nor pension any minister of religion, for the purpose of supporting and extending it—which is the proper business of the *Church*—and that no religious test should be required as a qualification

for any public trust or office — This is what they resolved *not to do*.

But what they resolved *to do*, and what they *did*, was this: For the sake, not primarily of religion, but of the State, from a wise regard to its prosperity and permanence, they recognized the common Christianity of the land; they, in effect, proclaimed themselves a Christian State; they believed it a needful condition of national well-being that the God of the Bible, in whose hands are the destinies of nations, should be recognized and honored. Then, entirely severed from the Church, the State felt free to bring its common Christianity to the aid of its prosperity — in precisely the same manner, and on the same principles, that she is free to secure and pay for the aid of the sciences and arts, which, in her judgment, contribute to her strength and welfare.

With this distinction borne in mind, we can readily explain all the conduct of our forefathers during, and subsequent to, the revolution; and see how they were, at the same time, earnest to keep the Church and State separate, and yet to uphold, and sometimes employ, the common Christianity of all the churches for the benefit of the State.

Let us look more particularly into the action of the State in reference to Christianity, and we shall perceive the justice of these observations.

When we look back upon the first meeting of the first Continental Congress, in this city, in September, 1774, we perceive that it was a crisis of momentous interest in



human affairs. Among that "collection of the greatest men upon this continent"—as John Adams described them—there was a clear perception of the peril and responsibilities of their position, and of the vast results, for weal or wo, which depended upon their deliberations. Denounced as rebels, coming up from feeble and sparse populations to organize resistance against a mighty empire, they paused before they entered upon their work, to invoke the blessing of Him, without whom there could have been neither strength, nor wisdom, nor success.

Congress met on the 5th of February. On the 6th it was "resolved that the Rev. Mr. Duché be desired to open the Congress on the following morning with prayers." Among the earliest utterances of that freedom which came from Christianity, was the voice of acknowledgment and prayer to the God from whom it came. So interesting, affecting, and instructive was the scene which expressed the spirit in which the struggle for independence was to be conducted, that I venture upon its description.

The scene has been described by the first President Adams. "Mr. Duché appeared," says Mr. Adams, "with his clerk and in his pontifical, and read several prayers in the established form, and then read the collect (he means the Psalter) for the 7th day of September, which was the thirty-fifth Psalm. You must remember this was the next morning after we had heard of the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if



Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning.

“After this Mr. Duché, unexpectedly to every body, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced. Episcopalian as he is, Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor, such ardor, such earnestness and pathos, and in language so elegant and sublime, for America, for Congress, for the province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston. It had an excellent effect upon everybody here.”

Among the papers of Charles Thompson, Secretary of Congress, a prayer was found which purports to have been the one used on that occasion. A manuscript copy of this prayer is preserved in the library of Congress. It is singularly suitable to the occasion, and I cannot see a sufficient reason to doubt its genuineness in the fact that it contains no specific petition for Massachusetts Bay and Boston. Mr. Duché may have given it to Mr. Thompson as it was composed; and the petitions for Massachusetts may have been those into which he “struck out,” under the impulse of the moment. Some of the sentences of this solemn prayer recall most vividly the perils of that gloomy and anxious hour, and the deep intensity of feeling which pervaded the assembly in the midst of which it was offered. As those fathers of the republic bowed their heads before God, these were some of the fervid words on which their hearts went upward to His throne :

“ Oh Lord ! our Heavenly Father, King of kings and Lord of lords ! who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth, and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all kingdoms, empires and governments, look down with mercy, we beseech Thee, on these American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor, and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring henceforth to be dependent only upon Thee. To Thee they have appealed for the righteousness of their cause ; to Thee they look up for that countenance and support which Thou alone canst give. Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under Thy nurturing care. Give them wisdom in council and valor in the field. Defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries. Convince them of the unrighteousness of their cause ; and if they persist in their sanguinary purposes, oh ! let the voice of thine unerring justice sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop the weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle.”

This solemn religious inauguration of the revolution was followed by several other acts of a similar character, and significant of the same mind and purpose. Among them were the appointment of two chaplains to Congress, the recommendation of the edition of the Bible printed by Robert Atkin to the people of the United States, and the appointment of days of fasting and prayer to Almighty God. Thus did the representatives of the United States own and honor the God of the Bible.

In all this proceeding on the part of Congress we see a

distinct recognition of the common Christianity of the confederation.

When independence was achieved, and the convention for framing the constitution were unable to reconcile the conflicting interests of the States, and the freedom which had been so dearly won seemed about to lapse into anarchy, again, at the suggestion of Franklin, in words which ought to be prefixed in golden letters to the constitution, the aid of the Almighty was invoked, and harmony speedily secured.

Thus spake the venerable man: "Mr. President, the small progress which we have made after four or five weeks close and constant reasoning with each other, our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many noes as ayes, is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running around in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models for government, and examined the different forms of those republics, which, having been formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist; and we have viewed the modern States all around Europe, and find none of their constitutions suitable to our circumstances.

"In this situation, the assembly groping, as it were, in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto thought of applying humbly to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings?

In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a Superior Power in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow can not fall to the ground without His notice, how can an empire rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the Sacred Writings, that except the Lord keep the house, the watchman waketh but in vain. I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

The suggestion of Dr. Franklin was adopted. Harmony was restored. The constitution was completed. The first great movement of the revolution commenced with prayer; in prayer its crowning work was consummated.

And now, when a grateful country summoned Washington from his retreat to assume the Chair of State, and when the august ceremony of the inauguration of the first President of the United States under the new constitu-

tion was about to be performed, it was not without religious services and sanctions of the most impressive and striking character that the great event was celebrated. By a joint action of the Senate and House it was "resolved that after the oath shall have been administered to the President, and members of the Senate, and the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives, will accompany him to hear Divine service performed by the chaplains of Congress." As the State, thus represented in all her departments, passes into the Church of God, led by the pious and majestic Washington, I seem to see, in expressive visible representation, the true relation of these two Heaven ordained institutions. In that significant and striking scene I see the Church and State, independent but related, not in organized union, but in fraternal fellowship, each rendering to the other honor and regard—the State learning the great religious and moral principles of its administration from the Church, and the Church enforcing the Divine obligation of duty to the State—the State rendering homage and returning thanks to the God of Nations for His signal mercies, and the Church expressing for her that praise and homage, and joining in it in her own prayers, and psalms, and spiritual songs. A more solemn recognition of Christianity as the religion of the country and of the State—a more distinct expression of the purpose to support it, in every way not inconsistent with the constitution—could not be made by a government which repudiated a church establishment.



But besides these and similar solemn national recognitions of Christianity as the religion of the land and of the State, there have been other measures on the part of the government which seem to have the aspect of a still more formal and legal sanction.

The Christian Sabbath is recognized by the general government, and has been from the beginning. It is, in the language of the law, a "*dies non*." On that day the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of the government do not transact business. It is a day which cannot be used for serving a legal process, for the return of writs, or other judicial purposes; and if so used, these instruments and proceedings would be void of legal force. Now here is a recognition, not of religion in general, but of the Christian religion in particular—not of both dispensations alike—the Jewish and the Christian—but of the Christian dispensation alone—in the fact that the government acknowledges the Christian Sabbath and ignores the Jewish Sabbath. Does not the government by this action distinctly say—"We will not, indeed, establish any religion, or any form of religion, nor support its institutions or ministers from the public treasury; but as the religion of the people of this country, and our own religion, is Christianity, from respect to their sacred convictions, and our own, and from regard to God's law, and that we may enjoy His blessing, we will give national recognition and honor to His sacred day?" Surely, the action of our government



in reference to the Christian Sabbath speaks a language no less emphatic and distinct than this!

The same purpose on the part of the general government to recognize the Christianity of the people, and to express its own felt dependence for prosperity and success on the blessing of that God whose will is revealed in His Holy Word, appears from the appointment of days of thanksgiving and prayer, and from its appointment of chaplains for the Congress and for the army and navy of the United States.

Such days of fasting and humiliation and of thanksgivings were frequently set apart by the general government in an earlier period of our history. Several of them were appointed during the revolution. At the very commencement of the federal government, in September 25, 1789, a joint committee of both houses was directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he would recommend to the people of the United States "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God."

Such are some of the *facts*, not few nor of doubtful meaning, which establish the position that Christianity is the admitted and honored religion of the nation. It was plainly the *purpose* of the people of the United States that the government which they formed should be recognized as Christian and honor the God of Christianity for *its own sake*, from a wise regard to its permanence and prosperity, and that it would sometimes employ the com

mon Christianity of the Church for the benefit of the State. "The real object," says Judge Tucker, "of those articles of the constitution which relate to religion was not to countenance, much less to advance, Mohammedanism or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry of Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment." Doubtless that *was* the real object. The conduct of the framers of the constitution is the best commentary on its meaning. They favored and recognized Christianity, but they established no religious test for holding office; they made "no laws respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof." All the proceedings of the general government in reference to religion, since its formation, have been perfectly consistent with the constitution and with the fundamental principles of republican government.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I will aim to show :

1. That it was the purpose of the people who framed this government that Christianity should be recognized and honored.

2. That it was no part of the object of those provisions of the constitution which relate to religion, to prevent such recognition.

3. That all the proceedings of the general government in reference to religion are perfectly consistent with the provisions of the constitution, and with the fundamental principles of republican governments.

1. I contend that it was the purpose of the people who framed this government that Christianity should be recognized and honored.

I argue that such was their purpose from the fact that, as citizens of the various States of this confederacy, they had always rendered to it this honor. We can see no reason for their acting on this subject in one character as citizens of the several States, and in another character as citizens of the federal government.

We argue that such was their purpose, from the language of the most illustrious of the public men—those who most surely knew and accurately expressed the public mind—who were most instrumental in framing, and the first to set in motion, and conduct the general government. It must be remembered that these most striking recognitions of Christianity, which we have described, were made under the lead and by the agency of the men who achieved our independence and formed our constitution. In making them they well knew that they conformed to the mind and purpose of those whom they represented; and that they did not violate the provisions of that great instrument, (the constitution,) which was fashioned by themselves.

Who so well as Washington expressed the sentiment and feeling of the people of this country? Our children know his farewell words on the subject of the necessity of religion and morality to the prosperity of the State: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. The

mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. Let us indulge with caution the supposition that morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." Golden words! to which others, spoken in return to an address from a religious body, may be fitly added: "While just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support." Such was the spirit in which our constitution was framed and our government administered—a spirit which would at the same time cherish religion as the surest support of a just government, and keep it politically dissociated from the State, that it might retain its purity and power.

"On a thanksgiving day," says Bishop White, "appointed by the President for the suppression of the western insurrection, I preached in his presence. The subject was, The Connexion between Religion and Civil Happiness. It was misrepresented by one of the newspapers. This induced the publishing of the sermon, with a dedication to the President, pointedly pleading his proclamation in favor of the connexion affirmed. It did not appear that he disallowed the use of his name. Although, in my estimation, the entire separation between Christianity and the civil government would be a relinquishment of religion in the abstract, yet that this was the sentiment of the President I have no right positively to infer."

The elder President Adams, in his inaugural address, declares "his veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolu-

tion to consider a decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service." Such was the language of the first men of that day, in Church and State, who watched and participated in the formation of the government; from which we argue with the utmost confidence, that it was the purpose of the people of this country, in the formation of a new government, that it should recognize and honor the religion of the Bible.

And inasmuch as we have shown, by conspicuous evidences, that the government *did* thus own and pay homage to Christianity, we conclude with an absolute certainty that it was done in accordance with a settled purpose and design.

II. And now we would show that it was no part of the object of the constitution, in the articles which relate to religion, to prevent such recognition.

"There shall be no religious test for holding office; there shall be no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." So much, and no more, the constitution says on the subject of religion.

"The real object," says Judge Tucker in his notes on Blackstone, "was not to countenance, much less to advance, Mohammedanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry of Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment which should give to an hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government."

That this was its object, and that its object was not to

prohibit the government from ever doing anything which should admit the truth, or redound to the honor, or promote the interests of Christianity, as some would have us believe, is evident by the commentary of their own conduct on their own proceedings. As high legal authority as any in the land—that of Judge Story—supports this assertion:

“Indeed,” he says, “the right of society or government to interfere in matters of religion will hardly be contested by any persons who believe that piety, religion and morality are intimately connected with the well-being of the State and indispensable to the administration of public justice. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how any civilized society can well exist without them. At all events, it is impossible for those who believe in the truth of Christianity as a Divine revelation to doubt that it is the special duty of government to foster and encourage it in all citizens and subjects.”

All the history of the times, and all the comments of the best expounders of the constitution, concur in proving that it was no part of the design of those articles which relate to religion to forbid the same national acknowledgment of Christianity under the federal government as prevailed under the confederation.

III. I now propose to show that all the proceedings of the general government in reference to religion were perfectly consistent with the constitution, and with the fundamental principles of republican government.

It is needful to dwell upon and enforce this truth; it is needful that it should be understood, believed, and



recognized, lest the State be led to disown the Bible and the God to whom it owes all its prosperity and power. Our government has been too sensitive to the clamor which finds a union of the Church and State, and a subjection of the civil to priestly power, in every acknowledgment of God by government, and in every association of religious services with public acts. The consequence is, that it now hesitates to do many things which it once did unquestioned and unblamed. We have seen what solemn religious services gave sacred impressiveness to the inauguration of the first President of the United States. Now, that most important of all national ceremonies—that on which the most momentous consequences depend, and on which, above all, we need to secure God's blessing—is performed without one word of prayer or praise to God. We have seen how readily the Congress and the President recommended to the people of the United States to observe days of humiliation and fasting, or of thanksgiving and praise, to Almighty God. The custom has long since ceased. Some few years since, the clergy of the District of Columbia addressed a request to the then President of the United States, through the Secretary of State, Mr. Webster, on a memorable occasion of national disaster, praying him to recommend a day of humiliation and of prayer to the people of the United States, or, in case that should be thought inexpedient, to the people of the District. Mr. Webster highly approved the suggestion, and drew up a form for such a proclamation; but it was not issued to the people of the

United States, nor even to the District of Columbia, on the ground that there might be a Jew, Turk, or infidel within the ten miles square to whom it might be distasteful. If this spirit is to prevail, the God of our fathers will soon be altogether dishonored and disowned by the nation on which He has showered His choicest blessings.

It is important that the idea should again take its old place in the public mind, and heart, and conscience, that God may be owned and honored by the State, that Christianity may be recognized and favored by the government, and that all this may be done not only without any violation of the principles of the constitution, but in the very spirit of the fathers by whom it was prepared, and under the impulse of an enlightened and patriotic regard to the rights, the liberties, the peace, the prosperity, and the happiness of the land. This point I propose to prove.

It already sufficiently appears that the express provisions of the constitution have not been violated by any action of the government hitherto in reference to religion. No religious test has been instituted—no religious establishment has been created—no religious liberty has been abridged.

But it is by some contended that the spirit of the constitution is violated, and the real principles of the republican government disregarded, by such measures of sanction and acknowledgment of Christianity as the government from the beginning has been accustomed to

bestow. Others contend that in the employment of chaplains at the public expense the constitution is directly violated. Let us see.

It is evident that the vast majority of the people in this country are Christians in opinion and feeling. Now, it is a characteristic of republican government, it is altogether in harmony with its spirit, that the prevailing will, and mind, and character of the people should appear and express themselves in and through its government. Not only does the will of the majority embody itself in positive laws, but the character and spirit, and temper of the majority express themselves freely, spontaneously, and unrebuked in the language and in the general policy of the government, so long as it violates no constitutional provisions, and no rights or laws of States or citizens. We are an energetic people, and our energy breaks forth in the language and deeds of government. We are a progressive people, and that spirit speaks through our legislation. We are an inventive people, and that spirit finds expression through the public institutions of the land. Either in the form of express enactments, which are in harmony with the fundamental law, or in its general language and bearing, that which is the prevailing spirit of a free people will find its spontaneous and free expression through its government. The Christian sentiment and feeling of the people of this country, like every other prevailing characteristic, finds expression through the government of the country. And why, when it violates no law, should not this highest and noblest principle and

feeling give itself free and glad expression? We are yet a Christian people. We remember our fathers' God. We trace our civil liberties to the freedom wherewith Christ made our fathers free. We love our country and our institutions with a Christian's love. We have an abiding conviction of the truth which the great Father of his country bequeathed to us, that the only security for liberty is to be found in the morality which rests upon religion.

And now, I ask, if he is a true republican who tells us that this greatest sentiment, and strongest conviction, and holiest feeling of the nation's heart shall have no expression in the national government? What! shall the spirit of enterprise and adventure speak through the Executive, and lift its clarion voice in the halls of legislation, and stretch out its hand to grasp the new El Dorado of the West, and lay its iron path and speed its iron car, and stretch its whispering wire from sea to sea—shall all this partial and scattered and temporary feeling force itself through our national institutions, and shall the permanent, deep-seated, wide-spread, Christian principle of the land speak through them never?

No! This can not be! He has no claim to the character of a true republican who would have it so. When the government recognizes Christianity, and commends religion to its citizens, and observes the Christian Sabbath, and provides religious services for those in its employment, it exemplifies the very spirit of a true republicanism; for it shows a deference to the feelings, principles, and wishes

of a majority of its citizens. They who would have the government omit such action would subject the many to the dictation of the few.

But it has been contended that in the one point of employing and paying chaplains of Congress and of the army and navy, the government violates the Constitution, inasmuch as it appropriates the public money directly to pay ministers of religion for religious services. Frequent memorials are sent up to Congress praying that these offices may be abolished, on the ground that an established chaplainship is as grievous to many consciences as an established church; that this is, in fact, that aid or endowment of a particular religion, Christianity, which, according to one of the definitions of Judge Story, is a union of Church and State; that the general government is established only for certain specified purposes, among which the promotion of religion, and the support of its institutions, and the employment of its ministers, are not found; and that, therefore, it should have nothing to say or do upon the subject. They conclude that all reference to religion and all connexion of its services with the government, and especially all support or payment for such services, should cease.

Now, by the aid of the light which we have already obtained upon this subject let us see what force there is in these representations.

We have seen that the Christianity of a people may be recognized by government, and expressed through government, not only without any violation of, but in complete



harmony with, the principles and the spirit of our republican institutions. We have seen that in all those other recognitions and acknowledgments of Christianity which have been made by government, except in this one of the institution of chaplains, it has not, in the smallest degree, violated the letter or the spirit of the Constitution. Has it done so by the appointment and support of chaplains? It is obvious to remark, in the first place, that the Constitution has nowhere forbidden their appointment, and that those who framed it, previous, and during, and subsequent to this formation, appointed and employed them. As they existed in the army and navy and Congress, prior to the adoption of the Constitution, it is obvious that, in the absence of any enumeration of the officers to be constituted in these departments of the public service, it was fully in the power of government to continue to appoint them.

They did so for the benefit of the public service. Empowered by the Constitution to make all laws necessary to carry into execution the other specified powers, they made, among others, a law that there should be chaplains connected with the two branches of the national defense and with Congress. They had a right to do it, and the interest of the public service, in their judgment, made that right a duty. We freely grant, that if government had passed laws on the ground that it was their duty to sustain and extend religion, as such, and to that end to pay and employ the Christian ministry, that would have been a violation of its intent and spirit, if not



of the very letter, of the Constitution. But it does no such thing. For its own sake, for the sake of the public service, to supply the wants of those in its employment, it appoints and pays chaplains. Their employment may be vindicated on precisely the same grounds and principles, if we were unwilling to take higher, as is that of surgeons and physicians. Both are employed because those who are engaged in the public service were accustomed to them in their private life; because it is due to them to furnish that for them in public life which in private life is counted among the universal privileges of freemen; because by such a course a better class of men for the public service will be secured; because their employment tends to promote the health, industry, sobriety, and fidelity of those who do the nation's work; because, as it is the dictate of humanity that the government should have by the side of the sailor and the soldier, in their employment, a surgeon to whom he may turn for relief from his agony when wounded in his country's service, so it is no less the dictate of humanity that it should have by the side of him who dies in his country's service a minister of God, to whom he may turn, if he desire, and lay open the fears and agonies of his departing soul, and receive from him instruction, comfort, peace! On the ground, then, of the interests of the public service, and of mere duty and humanity to those in its employment, government stands fully vindicated in the permanent establishment of a chaplaincy for the public service.

But those who make this objection contend that it is unjust that their money should support measures of which they disapprove. Do they mean to contend that no money shall ever be appropriated for any object of which some of our citizens disapprove? The contributions of many citizens must constantly go to the support of some measure of which they personally disapprove, but which the majority have ordained. Take the case of physicians and surgeons employed by government. In reference to the science of medicine, as well as in reference to religion, these are infidels, heretics, and scoffers. There are also homœopathic, and hydropathic, and other doctors, and disciples. Now to all these classes it may seem a monstrous thing that the citizens of a free and independent country should by law be dosed and bled to their injury (as they believe) rather than their good; and, above all, that they should be taxed (to the extent possibly of a cent each) to sustain a system of medicine against which they have many hard things to say. But there is no help for it! Those who belong to these schools of medicine must go down to their graves with this heavy weight upon their minds and this grievous tax upon their purses.

But it is said that this system touches the conscience of the objector. The conscience of modern times is often as expansive as its benevolence. It often comes out of the individual breast to which it belongs, and from the personality where it should exercise its office of accusing or else excusing, and, slightly attached to the *outside* of the individual soul, spreads itself, a delicate, sensitive film,

over all the earth, and trembles at the wrong-doing of the world in general, and, most of all, at that which is most remote from its own personal obligation. It is enough, and all that human governments can accomplish, that the conscience of each individual should be left entirely free, and that no man, in his civil privileges and rights, should be the better or the worse for his religious opinions. This is secured under our government, and it is more than was ever secured by any government before.

But this liberty of conscience would *not* be enjoyed by all, if those who would dissociate all religious privileges from the public service should succeed. Provision is *now* made in the public service for all who wish to avail themselves of religious instruction, and services, and sacraments, to do so ; and those who do not wish to avail themselves of them are not forced to accept them. Here is provision made to *satisfy the consciences of all*. But if this arrangement were destroyed, then not only would infidelity be established and God nominally disowned, but they who in public employment wished to worship God would not have the opportunity. Now, here *would be* a case of gross violation of the rights of conscience. Thus they who are themselves permitted just as they please, to worship or deny their God, would not permit others to worship or not to worship as they might prefer, but would force them *not to worship*.

Let any man think of the condition of many men in the public service, and I am sure he could not have the heart to wish to have this provision changed. Upon the

deck, or in the battle-field, or in the hospital, one who has been brought up in a Christian family lies dying. What is it in that dread hour that he wishes most? What gift from the country for which he has poured out his life would he most prize? In that hour his heart returns to his home, his mother, his church, his pastor, and the blessed truths which he learned in childhood. Now there is no gift which his country could bestow upon him in that last hour that would be so precious to him as the gift of a minister of God to convey to him the consolations of the Gospel, and to prepare him for the future world. Should a great country for whom he dies, refuse him that small boon? I envy not the heart of the man who would rob a public servant of that which costs so little, and is so precious to him to whom it is given.

The truth is, the union of Church and State is one of the least of all our dangers. No class desires it. Least of all is it desired by the clergy. No class of men in the country entertain a warmer, more patriotic, and intelligent love for our republican institutions than the clergy. They know too well on what their own dignity and independence depend, to be willing to have themselves or their churches subjected to the paralyzing patronage and corrupting dictation of the State.



# The Low Estimate of Human Life

IN THE UNITED STATES.





## II.

### D I S C O U R S E.

My mind has been drawn to the low estimate placed on human life in this country, by the recent death, from injuries received from the bursting of a steamboat boiler, at St. Louis, of a very dear and valued friend and brother in the ministry. The Reverend Stephen G. Gassaway, a few years since Rector of Christ Church, Georgetown, was well known and well esteemed by many persons in this community. He was my near and honored friend. He was as a man and a minister of God, worthy alike of affection and respect. To great amiability, winning ingenuousness and affectionate warmth of character, there was added a clearness of intellect, a steadiness of zeal, and an ability to labor, which made him an eminently useful and honored minister of Christ. I recall the earnest ardor and the large hope with which he entered upon his labor in the important field where he fell; I think of his stricken parish and his bereaved family; I know the present unusual difficulty of supplying the place of God's standard bearers as they fall, and bowing meekly and submissively to the will of the Master who has seen fit, *in this way*, to summon His servant, in the full prime of all his powers, to that upper Temple where "His servants"

still "serve Him," I yet can not restrain a feeling of indignation at the cruel and wanton selfishness, which all over this land crushes out precious lives like his, as if they were moths, beneath the wheels of its rapid and resistless car. "Thou wast slain, my brother, in thine high places of honor, usefulness and esteem! Very pleasant hast thou been to me! Thy love to me was warm and true! We took sweet counsel together in the house of God, and I, the elder and the feeble, still remain, and thou, the younger and the stronger, hast gone before. I can not call thee back; but o'er thy new made grave I will utter my humble but solemn testimony against that system of reckless and wholesale murder which defiles the land with blood!"

Protestant Christianity, and true Republicanism, its offspring, are by nothing more distinguished than by the high value which they place upon the individual man — upon his rights and upon his life. The first and highest of all rights is a right to life. The greatest wrong which a man can commit against another is to take away his life. When our fathers proclaimed as a self-evident truth, that God had endowed men with certain inalienable rights, the first which they enumerated was a right to life. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" — these, in their judgment, were men's prime rights. Life was the first of all. So sacred a thing is human life, that when it becomes useless to its possessor — as in the case of the idiot and the insane — and when the State has a right to deprive him of liberty, it is bound to preserve this sacred gift from God inviolate. It is the characteristic of despot-

isms to hold human life cheap in comparison with the accomplishment of its own selfish purposes. But Christianity proclaims man to be an immortal. It shows that the character of his eternity depends upon his use of time. It assigns, therefore, priceless value to a mortal life. Republicanism, inspired by this great truth, insists that man shall be free, and his life guarded, in order that he may, on his own responsibility, work out his own probation. It reverses the maxims of despotism, and declares that men are not made for the use of the State; but that the State is constituted for the protection and happiness of men. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." When it is held at the mercy or caprice of single tyrants or of Governments; when its tenure is made to depend on the care or carelessness, the honest fidelity or the dishonest recklessness, of combinations and corporations who are beyond the reach of retribution — then is the most sacred of human rights trampled upon; then is the first, the originating, the essential principle of a free state violated. The importance, the dignity, the sacred rights, the guarded freedom, the protected life, of *the individual man*, constitute the first articles of the creed of freedom. It is the true spirit of the citizens of a Republic to have a deep sense of the inviolability, the sacredness, and the value of human life.

But strange to say, if we may judge from the recklessness with which it destroyed, and the apathy with which its wholesale destruction is regarded, there is a very low estimate of value placed upon human life in this

country. It is to this alarming fact, its causes, its consequence and its cure, that I invite your brief attention.

The *fact* that human life is lightly regarded, is evident from the journals of the day. I venture to say that each day's paper of the coming week will probably contain an account of at least one *horrible accident*, as it is called, on railroad or steamboat, or in a manufactory, a theatre or circus; or some dreadful homicides by mobs or personal rencontres, which will be read by us with great composure:—but any one of which, a few years since, would have sent a thrill of sympathy or terror throughout all the land. It is probable that more travelers perish by railroads and steamboats in the United States, than in all the remainder of the civilized world combined. Men and companies are allowed to build tall, loose houses, which fall and crush the inmates or the passers by. Fast, fragile steamboats, fitted only for “the smooth surface of a Summer sea,” are sent forth with their precious freight of human life, to battle with the Northern blast and the Winter's waves. Conductors of cars rush into raised draw bridges, and against other trains, and down precipices; and the result is chronicled as a *frightful accident*—not a *frightful crime*. Boats constructed to secure speed without safety, are permitted to run races on our inland waters; and the lives of their crowd of passengers are often sacrificed to the pride, the bets, the pecuniary interests, the excitement, the recklessness of their officers and owners. In our large cities, combinations of young ruffians, bearing slang names, carrying pistols and dirks,

and heating their already savage natures into fiendishness at the grog-shops, in merest wantonness, upon slight and no provocation—engage in murderous brawls among themselves, or attack and mangle and murder unoffending citizens. There are facts familiar to us all. We are becoming accustomed to them, as the conditions and the drawbacks of our prosperity and progress. We are learning to place a low value upon human life. It is a strange state of things. It is in conflict with the spirit and with the first principles of freedom. What are the causes of it?

It can not be denied that, though this feeling is uncongenial with the spirit of our institutions, there are peculiarities in our national existence which habituate our minds to the frequent loss and waste of human life. The circumstances under which, as a young, new nation, occupying a vast territory, we are placed, render it inevitable that many precious lives should be sacrificed. The planting of colonies in wild, distant scenes; the dangers and hardships, and conflicts with savage tribes, to which new settlers are subjected; the state of license which prevails in remote and partially organized communities; the natural resort to them by many who are the out-casts of civilization—these are the causes which must produce frequent waste and destruction of human life, alike of the precious and the vile, and habituate the minds of our citizens to the fact as an inevitable *incident* of the first settlement of States, which will ultimately be blest with all the best gifts of liberty, civilization and refinement.



But the fact that many lives are lost by circumstances and conditions which are *unavoidable* should not have any effect of diminishing our sense of the sacredness of human life, and of the solemn duty of protecting it where those circumstances do not exist.

The system which places travelers at the mercy of great, invisible, and apparently unassailable corporations, originated in the exercise of an undoubted right of freemen. It is this fact, and the fear that we may violate this right, that has made us submit the more willingly to the perils to which we have been exposed. A man or body of men, may offer to transport us, in a certain way, at a certain price and speed, by stage, or car, or boat, from place to place; and we, judging of their ability, the safety or danger of the conveyance, may accept or decline the offer. It is the case of demand and supply, which should be placed on the same footing it is said, with all other cases of a similar kind. As the traveler has a right to determine whether he will accept such an offer, so he who makes it has a right to make it in the way and on the conditions that he may please. Such has been, and is, the feeling of many persons upon this subject. They have consented to be slaughtered, under the impression that if they declined or remonstrated, or invoked the aid of Governments, they would be violating the rights of individuals or corporations. They think it is all in accordance with the principles of pure republicanism that these corporations should have the privilege of murdering us if we choose to go upon their road; but it would be aristo-

cratic, tyrannical, and an invasion of private rights if we should rob them of this privilege and compel them to carry us in safety. But if one class of citizens ought to have the privilege of supplying a demand, *another class ought to be protected in receiving that supply.* Government is bound to protect the traveler. Railroad and steamboat lines are almost always, and of necessity, monopolies. The passenger can not choose one of many. He must take one or none. He must go by the single line, which has driven off all others, or remain behind. It is not a common case of supply and demand, where, if a man does not like an article, he can decline to purchase it and go elsewhere, and obtain one that suits him. The Company has the traveler in its power. The Government which gives the Company this power should limit it and insist upon securities for the life and safety of the passengers. As it consigns the lives of thousands and millions of its citizens to the charge and power of the Corporation, it should be rigid in the conditions which it imposes upon it for their safety; it should make the violation of its engagements to observe the rules which guard the lives of citizens, a forfeiture of charter; it should call carelessness, recklessness and omission of duty a *crime*, and punish it as a crime. We shall violate no rights of individuals or of corporations, by insisting upon it that we shall have the right to our own lives when we consign them to their care.

This careless destruction of human life has for its chief cause *the love of money.* The object of the companies

and corporations which possess the lines of travel is, of course, to make money. The respectable gentlemen who, for the most part, constitute them, have no wish or design to kill any one. In their individual capacities they have nothing murderous in their disposition. But they wish and design to make money. As corporations, that is their only object. It is not true that corporations have not souls, for they *think* sagaciously and well. It is not true that they have not hearts, for they feel the joy of dividends. It were nearer the truth to say that corporations have no consciences, than that they have no souls. The love of dividends, the false feeling of a divided responsibility, the consciousness of their individual immunity on the part of some, and utter recklessness as to the consequence which may befall travelers, so that their profits are secured; and a selfish unwillingness to incur the expenses which are necessary to the public security, on the part of others,—these are the reasons why the free citizens of this country are consigned over, helpless and trembling, to the disposal of grasping, pitiless, and haughty monopolies. Hence, railroads over mud, mounds and fragile bridges, which a single storm destroys; single tracks on our most frequented routes; incompetent but *cheap* conductors and engineers; no proper system of signals; no careful inspection of machinery; no rigid and unalterable rules of time of running to prevent collisions; no presence of the officials of government to enforce the conditions upon which the charter of the road was granted; the absence in short of all those provisions and pains-tak-

ing securities against danger which make the traveler feel at ease in royal England, in imperial France, and in despotic Austria. I think that the place in which a citizen of the United States would be least likely to boast of the blessings of liberty, and of the superiority of his own country over others in the security of his personal freedom, rights and life, is a railroad car, which is passing along the track where the day previous a horrible accident occurred. By this system, men, women and children are mangled, murdered, and drowned—but railroads and steamboats pay. The dividends come in, and dividends are the chief end of corporate man.

Another cause of this prevailing waste and destruction of human life is found in *the general spirit of the community*. It is one of intense activity and high excitement. Men are too eager in their pursuits to heed the danger to which they are exposed. They are too busy in carrying on their own plans to pause and bury and avenge the dead, who have fallen at their side. They jump up bruised from the broken cars, or swim exhausted from the wrecked boat, and hasten to make up the time that they have lost. Travelers are themselves as frequently in fault as those who convey them. They demand speed rather than safety. Time is money, and money is life to them. They are proud of vast, showy boats, and lightning lines. They love the excitement of competition and of races. The enthusiasm, the pride, the patriotism, the poetry of many persons sees itself embodied in the rushing train, and

hears itself expressed in the wild shriek of the locomotive. The song they love is "The Song of Steam."

Another cause of this great destruction of human life, and of the low estimate that is placed upon it, is *the neglect of Legislatures to provide securities by law against the carelessness and the wantonness of the powerful monopolies which they create*. It is in direct opposition to the spirit of our institutions, that the rights and securities of the individual — of the poor citizen — should be invaded or put in peril by the money power,— by combinations of the rich who impose their conditions upon those who are powerless to resist them. But this is just what is done by Legislatures when they grant charters to these vast monopolies, or open to the wealthy the power of tempting the public to attractive modes of travel, without binding them rigidly, sternly, and in earnest, to every provision which is necessary for their comfort and safety. They are more ready to discuss political questions and abstractions, than to perfect and pass a steamboat bill. It is indispensable that the citizens of this country should be flattered; but it is not important that they should live.

Another cause which fosters and increases this reckless disregard of human life, is the *impunity with which these wholesale murders are committed*. After some awful tragedy, which has sent lamentation and mourning into many households, and which is manifestly the result of culpable carelessness, or of hot rivalry, a card will be published by the survivors, exculpating the agents of the atrocity, and commending them for their coolness and humanity, *after*



*the deed was done!* Or if brought to trial it will be postponed or protracted until public interest and curiosity are at rest, and then a verdict of acquittal will be rendered. When so many persons are desirous of abrogating that early law of God, "That whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"—when juries are so reluctant to bring in verdicts in cases of willful murder, because of the penalty of death—when they are so often composed in part (as they must be, when all voters are competent to act as jurymen,) of persons incompetent or of low moral tone, who sympathize more with the criminal than with his victim—when these are the frequent circumstances under which the steamboat and railroad murderers are brought to trial, we can not be surprised that they are seldom convicted. But surely if the heat of passion is the extenuation of a single murder, then is he who has not that excuse, but who perils the lives of thousands from motives of basest and merest selfishness, a thousand fold more guilty and more worthy of death, when he deals out wholesale destruction to the helpless and unoffending travelers, who have committed themselves to his care and relied upon his fidelity and honor.

The *consequences* of this state of things are truly appalling. The evil is increasing every day. Recklessness, emboldened by impunity, laughs at the terror it creates. The land is defiled with blood. Many most valuable lives are sacrificed. Many homes are filled with mourning. It is time that the people raise themselves and take this thing in hand. The evil and the outrage have become



insufferable. It is to be cowardly—it is to be unjust to themselves, to their country, to her fair fame, to Liberty and to justice; it is to be disloyal to duty and to patriotism, for the citizens of this country longer to submit, tamely and abjectly, to this irresponsible despotism which writes its decrees in blood. The whole matter is in their hands. We are not free, if we can not stir from our homes without terror, or leave our families without fearful forebodings on their part, that we shall be brought back mangled corpses. This recklessness of human life is a matter of reproach against us in other lands. It is an argument of despotism against free institutions. And if it be an inevitable incident and condition of a Republican Government, it is a good argument. It is one which is beginning to be felt by our own citizens. As increasing numbers travel abroad, and enjoy the sense of security which the care of Governments and the exercise of their authority produce, and contrast it with the danger and anxiety of traveling in our own land, they will become disgusted with the mere name of freedom, without security for their highest right, and prefer the reality of safety with the phraseology and inconveniences of despotism, to the mere nomenclature of liberty, without the possession of that dearest of all liberties—the *liberty to live!*

The only real, radical and effectual *remedy* for this evil is that religious and moral *national education* which will make us, as a nation, do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. There must be such a public sentiment as to *demand* that the suggestions of greed and

selfishness on the part of those who hold the lives of millions in their power, shall not be permitted to have their way, and peril and destroy thousands of citizens, and throw gloom and sorrow over unnumbered homes. There must be such a tone and habit of moral, benevolent and honorable sentiment and conduct on the part of those individuals who compose corporations and companies, as that they will faithfully and conscientiously make every possible provision for the comfort, confidence and safety of the passenger. If we cannot have so much of moral and religious principle in the land as to make these the *prevailing* sentiments of our citizens, this evil must continue and increase. We must ply every instrumentality of moral and religious training, which will produce habits of self control, of justice, of benevolence, of painstaking and conscientious fidelity to every trust. The artisans who make the axles, and wheels, and shafts, and boilers, and cars, and boats, as well as conductors, and captains, and corporations, must be made to feel and realize their immense responsibility to their fellow-citizens, and taught to discharge it as a solemn and lofty duty. When they thus discharge their duties, they are great benefactors to their country and their kind. They are the apostles and evangelists of a true and salutary progress.

And if we would remedy this dreadful evil we must call out, and make to bear upon this subject *the real feeling and sentiment of the vast majority of the people* who feel the bondage and tremble in the power of the irresponsible despotism to which we are subjected. We must

look to the *causes* of this evil, and in endeavoring to remove *them* we shall be applying its effective cure. We must not allow ourselves to believe, for a moment, that it is an undue exercise of power for Legislatures to impose and enforce such conditions upon companies and corporations as shall secure the public safety. We must not allow ourselves to be members of such corporations with an eye single to dividends. If we belong to them we must insist that every means for the safety of passengers be provided, whatever be its effect upon the value of the stock—or we must leave them. That is poor stock, whatever its market value, which is the price of blood. We must not partake in that insane and childish rage for speed which sanctions and stimulates the rivalry and recklessness of captains, conductors, and companies. We must do our part in bringing to justice and holding to strict account those who dash us over precipices and toss us in the air. The people must make Legislatures and Congress feel that they are aware of their excessive love for *them* and their *votes and offices*, but that they can not return this ardent attachment, nor give them their votes and offices, unless they *devote themselves in earnest to providing for the security of their rights and their lives*. Let them make it understood that they want to be beloved by their agents, but that they value above all things, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Those who sit upon juries and expound the laws, and administer justice, must act upon the principle that careless and wanton destruction of human life, from motives of avarice,

is murder of a deeper dye of guilt than that which results from the urgency of passion. The whole matter is in the hands of the sufferers and victims. If they will pause and take it up, it is in their power to supply the remedy.

And it seems to me that the time has fully come when the remedy should be applied. It was supposed that some of the awful catastrophes that have occurred would produce greater carefulness and security. They seem to have produced only insensibility in the public mind, and no diminution, certainly, of perils and of accidents. I believe that the time has come that *protective leagues and associations* should be formed in the commercial cities by men of standing, integrity and courage, who should devote themselves with the fearlessness of freemen "who know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain them," and with the benevolence and zeal of Christians and of patriots, to the great work of enforcing a reform in the present modes of travel. I believe that such an "Anti-Murdering Association" would be hailed with gratitude and supported with enthusiasm all over the land. Let them devote themselves to securing the legislation which shall enforce such stringent rules with high penalties as are needed for the safety of the traveler, and which shall make it a condition of all charters that some officials appointed by Government, as is the case in other countries, shall see to and enforce the fulfillment of its pledges. Let them expose, and denounce, and prosecute in the Courts all instances of cruel and murderous carelessness. Let them,

without fear or favor, publish to the world all the facts, which will make the officers and Companies to whom our lives are consigned know that sharp eyes are upon them, and that they will be prosecuted and exposed if they are derelict in duty. A league like this, well endowed and furnished with benevolent, earnest, fearless freemen as its officers, would shed honor and bring down a blessing upon the city in which it should originate.

It is in vain to say that these accidents are unavoidable. That they are not unavoidable we know, because we know that they are avoided in other lands. We are not willing to confess our inferiority in mechanic art and skill to other nations. We have shown ourselves the superiors of all the nations of the world in those useful arts and mechanical inventions which pertain to daily life. It is obvious then, that our constant danger and our frequent accidents are not the result of a want of ability and skill, but of a want of care, of a low estimate of the value of human life, of grasping and heartless avarice, of hot haste, of heedless impetuosity. It is the juggernaut of wealth that we worship; and it is beneath its wheels that we are crushed!

In this subject every citizen of the United States has an interest. He has, in reference to it, a duty to discharge. He can give his testimony. He can utter his protest. He can use his influence. He can claim his rights. Our national happiness and good name, our national civilization and advancement are involved in the reformation of this evil. Good roads, safe, easy, cheap,

and rapid transit from one part of our vast country to another, are among our choicest privileges. They open the wildernesses ; they bid cities rise ; they diffuse knowledge ; they carry the Bible, and the Missionary of the Cross ; civilization, prosperity, and Christianity, are their constant passengers. Let us see to it that they do not become so terrifying by the dangers connected with them as that it shall be with us as it was in the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, “ when the *highways were unoccupied and the Travelers walked through by-ways !* ”





# Moral Laws Applied to Associated Action.

DELIVERED IN THE

HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FEBRUARY, 1850.



### III.

#### DISCOURSE.

I propose to speak of the application of moral and religious laws to associated action.

It is a prevalent idea that there is much less guilt in wrong committed by an individual in combination with others than in the same wrong, perpetrated by himself alone. Many persons appear to act upon the principle that it is lawful for them, *conjointly* with others, to do that which it would be *unlawful* for them to perform in their *individual* capacity. Men are accustomed to speak jocosely upon this subject, as if it were a generally understood and sly kind of *wisdom*, to act on this principle. It may be so; but of this we are sure, that it is not the wisdom that cometh from above. The wise Solomon knew nothing of it. *His* declaration is "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

Let us examine this principle—a principle more frequently acted upon than avowed—that what is wrong when performed by us as individuals, ceases, in whole or in part, to be wrong, when performed by us in connection with others.

I. If this principle be correct, then a wrong action performed by us in connection with others, loses its guilt, 1. Either because it is not our act; or, 2. It is our act only in part; or, 3. Being our act the responsibility is divided.

1. Is that then which we perform in combination with others *our act*? An action consists of two parts, the *consent* or *intention* of mind and the outward deed. The part of the action which constitutes its *moral* quality is the *consent* or intention of the mind. Now when we act voluntarily in combination with others, it is with the intention and consent of the mind, *together with so much* of the outward deed as is in our power. Clearly then the deed is ours; its full guilt or virtue belongs to us, because we have performed that part of the action on which its moral quality depends; and so much of the outward deed as the circumstance of being combined with others would allow. That the law of the land so regards this subject is evident from the fact that it holds the accomplice in crime equally guilty with the principal.

2. Still the impression may remain that when one act is performed by a number of individuals in combination, it is but in part the act of each individual and that it is a whole only as the act of all combined. When any measure is adopted by a corporation the feeling of each member of it seems to be that it is his but in part. If he be one of twelve persons he seems to suppose that he has performed but a twelfth part of the act. I suppose this impression arises from the fact that as an individual he is not held responsible by the law of the land, for what he

does as a member of a corporation; but that the corporation *as a unity* is held responsible for its deeds. This, as a law of the land, is wise, expedient and just. But it is not based upon the ground that each individual performs only a part of the act as *a moral one*. For if that were the ground of its provisions in reference to corporate bodies, then it might hold *each individual* of a corporation responsible; not indeed for the *whole* act, but only for so much of it as he performed. If that were the ground on which human law regarded the members of a corporation as one, then, when several criminals had conspired in the performance of a crime, it would have divided the act into as many parts as there were criminals, and have inflicted upon each but *his proportioned part* of the punishment, whereas it has held each of them as wholly guilty of the whole crime as if each of them had separately perpetrated it, in different places and on different persons.

Suppose now that there be an incorporated body of twelve individuals. An unjust or dishonest measure is, by an unanimous vote, adopted by them. Each man has given his consent, each does what he can — what belongs to his position as an officer or private member of the corporate body—to carry it into effect. Considered then, as *a moral act*, each individual performs that one deed, and each is as morally responsible for the deed as if he alone performed it. Morally, before God, they stand as twelve individuals, each of whom has been guilty of one undivided act of injustice or dishonesty. Before *God* they are twelve individuals with twelve separate crimes. Human



law has found it expedient to regard them as a unity, and the crime as one, and not to hold them individually responsible for the deed. But so far it is a moral, and not a mere legal offense, each individual has committed, not a part of the deed, but the full deed. It is impossible, from the nature of the case, to divide a moral action. It is an absurdity to speak of a half, or a twelfth part of a moral act. We do not say that this language is employed, but multitudes act as if the sentiment itself were true. Having been accustomed to regard the act of twelve incorporated individuals as *one, in one sense*, they have not unnaturally supposed it to be one in every sense. Then the conclusion seemed clear that the responsibility of the act was to be equally divided among all the members. The ambiguity of language has tended to fix and confirm this delusion. When two persons, in different places have been guilty of *murder*, we say familiarly that they have been guilty of *one and the same crime*. Now it is manifest that two crimes have been committed, and that they are one only in *nature* and in *kind*, and not in number; that they are the *same* only in the sense of having *sameness*. Yet because the moral act of each member of a corporation is one, in the sense of being one in nature and the same in kind, it has been regarded as but one in number and in reality.

3. But the question presents itself, if, *although* in such case, each individual actually performs the whole undivided deed, *yet* by being combined with others, is not the moral responsibility and the moral turpitude equally

divided among them all? We answer: "All are equally guilty with himself, it is true; but as each has performed a separate similar deed, each is as guilty of it as if it were performed by himself alone. For his own actions each man stands separately accountable to God. 'If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it.' That is: 'Thou canst not extend thy goodness over to another, that it shall be his; nor thy crime over upon another, that he shall bear thy punishment.'"

If this course of reasoning then be sound, it is evident that the wrong which we commit in combination with others does not on that account lose any thing of its immoral character, because it is still our act; because it is not and can not be part of an act; and because our moral accountability for an act which we have performed can not be transferred, in part or in whole, to another, though he may have performed the same act as ourselves.

II. Thus far I have shown that the wrong deed of a moral agent, which is committed in combination with others, has no less of guilt than the same deed committed by the same person in his individual capacity. Now it is my design to prove that the guilt of a person who performs an evil deed in conjunction with another, is of a deeper dye than if it were performed by himself alone. Whoever combines with others in wrong doing awfully increases the power of evil in his own heart, in the hearts of those with whom he acts, and in the community upon which their united influence is directed.

1. That Evil communications corrupt good manners, is a sentiment older than St. Paul. It was quoted by him from a heathen writer. An individual who dare only *think* of committing a crime alone, will be emboldened to *perpetrate* it in connection with another. The principle of Evil is strengthened in his heart, by finding it in the heart of another. When others stand ready to aid in the deed, to share its perils and as he thinks to divide its responsibilities, then the covert wish becomes confessed desire; the timid, doubtful purpose becomes bold, unhesitating resolve; the meditated crime, long smouldering in its inception, blazes forth into full and destructive completion. After the evil deed is done, that which would have been remorse if he had stood alone in the commission, becomes nothing keener than regret. To join hand in hand then to do wrong and to indulge in vicious passion and habit, is tremendously to strengthen that which is evil in our hearts. It dims our sense of the enormity of sin. It obliterates the lines which separate the realms of right and wrong. It wrests from conscience its sceptre. It robs remorse of its sting.

2. The evil which is increased in the heart of him who combines in evil counsels with another, acquires greater power also in the heart of him with whom he joins hands to commit iniquity. Bring two smouldering brands together, and both will burn the brighter for the contact. It is a law of our nature, from which there is no escape, that we influence for good or ill those with whom we are connected. No man liveth—no man can live—to

himself. To say that we have souls, and that we live in a peopled world, is to say that we have influence. It is streaming forth from us at every step of our existence. If we join with others in wrong doing we provoke them to evil works. God will hold me accountable for every evil deed which I have committed; and if in the performance of it I have acted in concert with another, I shall be responsible also for the evil influences which I have exerted upon his character.

3. Besides all this increased power of evil in our own hearts, and in the hearts of those with whom we may combine to sin, by the combination our united influence for evil is far greater than would be the added effects of the evil influences of each separately exerted. Union is indeed power; power for evil, as well as good. When men combine in injustice, fraud, or cruelty, their power to injure becomes fearful and gigantic. A few persons combined and acting in concert, can overcome a multitude unorganized and unprepared for resistance. Now when we remember how much more readily evil is propagated in the world than good; how it finds a spring in every heart it touches to speed it on to every other heart; how its stream deepens, widens and hastens as it goes on and down through time, we may well stand appalled at the frightful triumph of the wicked who join hand in hand and feel it to be indeed true, if there be a just God in Heaven, that the wicked shall not go unpunished. By such combination in sin a commerce is carried on, by which every heart receives ever-growing accessions of iniquity to

itself, and by which the accumulated and accumulating evil influence of all is cast upon the world. Let no one so deceive himself as to suppose that if he do but join with others to commit injustice, fraud or cruelty, he may, if honest in his individual transactions, escape unnoticed and undetected in the crowd. Let no one heedlessly follow a multitude to do evil, saying in his heart "the Lord will not regard it." He will regard it. He will visit this more desolating sin with a more desolating punishment. The Lord says of those sinners who thus hope to escape detection: "Though they dig into hell there shall my hand take them, and though they climb into heaven there shall my hand bring them down."

These principles apply to all corporations organized for the purposes of banking, constructing roads, canals or other public works ; for managing the financial affairs of churches, for the government of towns, for the purposes of education, or for any objects whatever. Whoever, for instance, as the officer of a bank, gives his sanction to a measure which the strictest principle of honesty between man and man would not allow, thereby teaches himself to be dishonest without the compunction which a first dishonesty awakens in the mind of its perpetrator ; he strengthens and emboldens those with whom he acts in their dishonesty, and inflicts upon the individual or the community manifold more evils than the same act committed by him as an individual could possibly have accomplished. Now if he acts as one of ten he may pacify his conscience by the plea that he is guilty of but a tenth part of the fraud, and that therefore



this little amount of sin will sit lightly on his soul. I tell him that if it be as a feather in its lightness on his spirit now, it will drop upon it a poison which will eat into his soul like fire. For a right morality teaches us that he is guilty of the whole dishonesty, and that if his combination with others modifies his guilt at all, it so *aggravates*, instead of extenuating it, as that he is guilty of the whole crime ten times repeated. And so the member of a railroad or steamboat company, who sanctions an act of imposition upon travelers, has upon his head the guilt of the deed so many times repeated as there are travelers who suffer by the act. The trustees of a church, or members of a vestry, who wantonly contract obligations which there is no probability of discharging; who refuse to pay honest debts; are as much more guilty than they would be for the same actions as individuals, as the influence connected with such combined action is greater, and as the object for which they are organized is higher and holier. They have taught themselves the dangerous lesson of doing a more evil thing, with a less consciousness of guilt.

There is another case of combined action to which these principles apply. There is one organized body to which we all belong. We are all members of civil society, organized into a government, for the accomplishment of certain objects. Omitting, at this time, reference to the fact that the existence of civil society and government, *in some form*, is an ordinance of God, we limit ourselves to the contemplation of that particular form, so full of blessings and of duties, which it assumes in our free land. With



us it is a fundamental principle that all governmental power is derived from the consent of the governed. "Civil society is with us," to use the words of an eminent jurist, "essentially a mutual compact entered into *between every individual and all the rest* of those who form the society. As all these individuals enter society upon the same terms, i.e., put themselves under the power of society in the same respects, the power of the society over the individual is derived from the concession of every individual, and is no other and in no wise different from what those individuals have made it. And, on the other hand, as every member of the society is party to the contract which the society has made to the individual, every member of the society is bound faithfully to execute the contract thus entered into." I need not say that with us these are not mere theoretical principles. They are contained in our State and National Constitutions. We have bound ourselves to adhere to them by contracts, signed and sealed.

Now, if we as members of this large organized body, combine to commit iniquity, we shall not be guiltless or unpunished. Our moral responsibility is no more destroyed or divided by the fact that we act in combination with ten million of individuals, than if we acted in concert with but ten. On the contrary, if there be any force in the principles which we have at this time stated, our obligations as citizens of a State are of tremendous moment. If a citizen commission by his vote his agent or representatives—for all public officers are with us but our agents—to do an act of fraud, to break a treaty, or to violate a right,

*he* does the deed ; the guilt of it is incalculably aggravated by the fact that he has taught himself to do evil without compunction ; that he has strengthened the principle of evil in his own heart ; and that the consequences of his action will have been wide spread and long enduring. When a State commits a fraud or wrong, there is not an abstraction, a mere thing of thought, named the State, to which men, throwing off the burden from their own souls, can refer the deed. It is the individual men who as legislators or officers perform the act ; and the individual citizens who sanction and sustain the act ; — these are the doers of the deed ! On the soul of each such man lies the burden of the guilt of a violated contract, of a dishonored pledge. To all, each man thus violating right has done a wrong ; because to all he is bound under the sanction of a solemn covenant.

2. There is another case, however, in which men frequently combine to commit iniquity, where the guilt of each is lightly spoken of and little regarded. It has become of late a thing alarmingly frequent, for individuals, in combination, if they dislike a law, wantonly to resist its execution, or violate its provisions. It is a fearful thing in a land where law is not hung up before the people's eye on the point of bayonet and spear ; but is reached forth to them paternally by an unarmed and undefended hand. When a law of the land is violated, whether, *in deed*, by a hot and heavy mob, or *in will*, by respectable citizens, who without expressed disapprobation or protest or lawfully exercised coercion, stand and give

their silent sanction to that mob's achievements ; whether under the mockery of the forms of legislation and the decrees of justice, or at the cannon's mouth ; under what pretense soever of patriotism or justice or abstract right such violation of law may be perpetrated, it is alike abhorrent from duty and fatal to interest. Party spirit, lust of power, lust of spoil, may mar the *beauty* of the temple of our liberties ; but disregard of law loosens its *corner-stone*. The one is a wanton and mischievous defacement of the capitals of its Corinthian pillars ; the other is a Vandal blow at the foundation on which rest their pedestals. When men combine to resist a law of the land—what do they do ? They violate a contract with every other individual of the State or Nation to which they belong ! This is what it is for a citizen of this republic to violate its laws. It is to be guilty of perjury to millions of individuals ; for he has solemnly sworn to the government, which is the agent of all the people, to maintain the law ; it is to violate millions of contracts ; for with millions is his contract made.

In truth many of our citizens seem incapable of realizing the high claims and the august majesty of law ; because they regard it merely as the temporary regulation of their own temporary agents. Very different are their feelings from those of the subjects of time-hallowed monarchies, who listen, with submissive reverence, to the awful mandates which issue from the distant, uplifted, spear-girt palaces of power. Our laws are given forth from no cloudy oracle, consecrated by time, and hallowed

by superstition. Now, inasmuch as we have put by all vulgar appliances for instilling and enforcing reverence for law, our citizens must feel its accumulated *moral* obligations in all their power ; or the tablet of our law will soon be the tomb-stone of the State, and its enactments her epitaph. Far more constraining and awful, because more obligatory, are the laws which emanate from a government which exists “by the consent of the governed,” whose statutes are the united will of all to which each has given assurances and pledges of obedience, than are the decrees of tyrannies whose right is might. Beautiful and expressive was that symbol of power carried before the Roman Kings and Consuls — a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle — emblematic of the fact that its power to punish hung upon the combined wills of the people, as did the axe upon the rod. The laws of our free land come to our souls bearing the sanction of heaven ; and loaded with the weight of the responsibility of millions of individual promises and oaths given under all the solemnities of written and accredited contracts. Let our enactments come to the soul with these grand moral responsibilities around them ; these silent, solemn legions of heaven as their armed emissaries and ministers ; and they shall strike the soul with more of awe than the most terrifying displays of human power. My weak human heart may, for a moment, shudder at the view of

“The uplifted axe, the agonizing wheel,  
Luke’s iron crown and Damien’s bed of steel,”

But another moment’s thought assures me that they

cannot cut or crush or dislocate the soul. I may hear Earth tremble beneath the tread of armies, and see the gleaming of their brave array, and hear the maddening clamor of their onset; and my soul may be appalled by the seemingly resistless might and majesty of the powers that move them; but I look up, and see Napoleon's legions wasting beneath withering winds, and the invincible Armadas of the deep sinking into raging waves — *the winds and the waves of God* — and I feel that there is a power above all human power, which has a higher claim on the awe and homage of my soul. Then let law come to me with no outward array of potency, but only surrounded by its manifold moral obligations, and I see it attended by powers which *can* reach and grasp and crush and dislocate the soul; I see with them, and presenting them, Him who holds in check, or sends forth to execute his purposes, the winds and the waves. I see in moral obligations his law for the soul. Oh, not a power or thing of human birth is law! "Her seat is the bosom of God; her voice is the harmony of the world." If we cannot bow to a lawful authority, accredited of heaven, and bearing in it multiplied and solemn responsibilities because it is self-imposed; because it comes from citizen legislators who are our agents, and not from the *adytum* of Kings, then let us take the charters of our freedom and go kneel before the footstool of kingly power, and beg its acceptance of the fatal trust, and ask for a master who can insure our safety and compel our obedience.

3. From the prevalence of the principle that if men

combine to commit iniquity the guilt of each individual so combining is thereby diminished, has arisen the correlative principle, equally false and no less injurious, that an individual may, with little or no guilt, commit wrong against corporate bodies or large communities. Hence it is sometimes found that a man whose moral sensibilities would be shocked at the idea of defrauding a fellow man, has no sense of guilt in deceiving or defrauding a government. Whether, however, in his individual capacity, or in that of an agent of any associated body of the government, a man thus acts, it is under a most gross delusion. He who makes a contract with government and defrauds that government, by failing to fulfil its provisions; he who brings against it false and exorbitant charges and obtains the payment of them, what does he other than defraud all the citizens of the community which that government represents? He can not meet a man in the streets who is a citizen of this country whom he has not cheated. When an agent or officer of government has learned to regard public property as less sacred than individual; when he takes advantage of his position to catch for himself the droppings from the leaking places of the national reservoir of wealth; when with bolder hand he appropriates to himself the public property, what does he do but commit the double crime of perjury and dishonesty against the millions whose trusts he has sworn on the altar of his country, faithfully to execute?

And now, my friends, I would in conclusion, call your attention to the most fearful and appalling joining of



hand in hand to commit iniquity and to resist and defy law, which it is possible to conceive. This world is under God, and God's law. This earth has a heaven above it, and a hell under it, and a law in it. Christ has walked upon it and died upon it, and ascended from it, and left with it an all-embracing economy and kingdom. We are under a government of God as the creatures of his hand; we are under the remedial system of the Saviour as the objects of his mercy. And look you now over this world, and see how vast is the combination of sinful and rebellious subjects who resist the law, and refuse to comply with the merciful arrangements of the Saviour. They are in league to live as rebels against God's authority. They will live as if there were no heaven above, nor hell below; no God, imposing law and preparing the penalty of its violation; no Christ, a Saviour now, and to be a Judge hereafter. And they are prodigiously strengthened in contempt and neglect of God's law because they join hand in hand. My friends, some of you are living without God, without seeking or caring to know and do his will; without reference or regard to the claims of Christ on your obedience, submission and affection. And because you stand in the midst of a vast multitude of those who do the same, you feel that you are safe and shielded from all retribution. But let me tell you this, *you are born and you live under a system of law—God's law—which you can not resist or evade!* You are under it at every instant, in every function of your body, and every faculty of your soul. It is *on* you, and *around* you, and *in* you;

and its armed penalties are ever with it. Can you resist the laws by which you were born, by which your body is nurtured, by which it is in health or sickness, by which you grow old and by which you must die? What would avail should all the world combine to resist and overcome them? Why even as the citizens of a State you are by birth issued into an existing system of law, which lays hold of you and constrains you, and does not wait for you to decide whether or no you will come under its provisions, but subjects you to its penalties. You can not rise up alone, or with others in the midst of the State and say "I choose to be exempt from these laws, for I had no hand in framing them." Violate them now and see how much respect our existing government under which you are born will pay to your lordly pretensions. And so I tell you, you are born under God's *moral* government and law. You are ushered into the midst of a moral and spiritual economy, which does not ask your assent before it subjects you to its constraint and penalty. You are God's creature, sinful and condemned. Christ has come to save you, and by compliance with his merciful system of redemption you may become pure and happy, here and hereafter. But resist it, or step aside from it, or evade it, you never, never can! Resist it? Go and master God's laws in the material world; overcome the elements and control the forces which are swaying you and controlling you—just as resistless in their operation upon you as upon the senseless trees and stones around you. Go and fight that battle, and conquer God on the field of

natural law, and then come back, flushed with triumph, to overcome those moral laws of your being, even yet more invariable and irresistible, which hold in sweet and willing loyalty the myriad intelligences of Heaven! I counsel you to forsake the doomed combination of impenitent men, who resist the claims of Christ. For on this earth *you are!* under God's law *you are!* a subject of Christ's economy *you are!* and from all those conditions of your being there is no escape; and the laws of this economy are silently, ceaselessly, irresistibly operating on every child of man who is living on the earth, and on every soul of man that is entering or has entered the eternal world. Leave the combination of the impenitent, and become members of that kingdom where hand joins in hand to practice righteousness; a holy league on which God's smile is resting and whose reward is peace here and blessedness in Heaven!













